THE ADVENTURES OF A MODERN OCCULTIST

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BY

OLIVER BLAND

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INTRODUCTION

The individual who deals with the by-paths and mysteries of that great Science which we term loosely Occultism, courts neither personal notoriety nor publicity for the strange proceedings in which he plays a part.

I have always been an energetic student of psychic matters, drawn thereto by the possession of certain unusual gifts with which Nature has endowed me. (Throughout the history of mankind there have always been a certain number of individuals who have kept alive the sacred fire and held the secret keys of many mysteries, and from time to time an advance in general human knowledge or in an applied art or science has revealed to the vulgar some small part of the outer mysteries that have always been known to the initiates. These disclosures are hailed as discoveries and set in their ordered place in the catalogue of human knowledge.)

There are in this book certain disclosures of hidden facts which are given to the world simply

because the time is ripe when they should be more fully known and their revelation is counselled by wisdom.

Human nature has always suffered from its lack of discrimination between Prophets and False Prophets, and one of the greatest difficulties that besets the Occultist is to know what is safe to reveal. It is for this reason that secrets are hidden from the vulgar and the charlatan, for these things must be hidden lest they are turned to base ends.

The revival of deep public interest in psychic matters is only a matter of time, and then those things which have been of absorbing interest to the few will become of vital interest to the many.

The following chapters are simply transcripts of some of the astoundingly interesting matters which have been reposing for years in my diaries and note-books.

They have been set out in conventional narrative form with no great changes except of names and places and the elimination of the rather involved scientific terminology of the psychologist and the laboratory. In these days

when men are turning from the crude materialism of the nineteenth century and the true scientist is the last person to deny the realities which were deemed mythical a few short years ago, they may serve to fill a certain need.

An interest in Occultism is common to most people, but a deep study of its principles and its phenomena is attainable only by the few. It is not advisable to seek transcendental experiences without a sound working knowledge of the root-springs of these phenomena, and one of the purposes of this volume is to render invaluable assistance to those who possess psychic gifts in greater or lesser degree.

The Spiritualist, the Theosophist, and the student of Psychic Research will all find in these pages much to interest them and much to ponder. It throws light in some of the dark places which have seemed obscure to those of the modern schools of thought who have not studied ancient knowledge.

As it is impossible to expound an infinite mass of fact within the limits of a slender volume, I have added footnotes here and there which will direct any interested reader to further sources

of information than my condensed text affords, but the purpose of the book is directed to the general reader rather than to the student or specialist who will doubtless know more than these pages can tell him.

OLIVER BLAND.

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"Read not to contradict and confute, not to believe and take for granted . . . . . but to weigh and consider."

Bacon's Essays.

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CHAPTER I

THE DEAD RAPPER

I HAD known Harry Carthew as a second-year man at Oxford. He never completed his course or took a degree because family reasons, some catastrophe of some kind or another—made it imperative for him to earn a living at once. As an undergraduate he was an ardent anti-Spiritualist.

He dropped out of sight of our little world and I had only heard of him casually as having something to do with oil wells in Mexico and had not come into contact with him for years. I was therefore rather surprised to receive a letter from him which showed that he was in London and knew that I was working on research subjects. His letter was couched in rather non-committal terms, and though he was

a man whom I had never known well, he expressed an anxiety to meet me again and lay before me certain psychical problems that were puzzling him.

I make it an invariable rule never to discuss psychic matters with people who are ignorant or sceptical of them, unless the sceptics are of a class sufficiently educated to be able to appreciate the absolute facts of the phenomena associated with Spiritualism.

It is impossible to convince a non-scientific person by facts, as he can never assure himself that the possibility of fraud has been absolutely eliminated. A scientist or an engineer can assure himself fairly easily of the genuineness or otherwise of phenomena provided that he is given every latitude for research. But it is difficult to convince either a clergyman or an ordinary medical man of the reality of any psychic phenomena because he is not mentally trained in the same inexorably logical processes of thought as are the engineers and scientists.

Experience has taught me to mistrust the man who approaches with indirect advances to the subject of Spiritualism. I prefer the definite

challenge of a critical journalist who demands facts and judges on facts, for it is undoubtedly an axiom that the Seeker after Truth, however sceptical he may be, has no hostile influence in a properly constituted circle.

It has ever been a matter of regret to me that the mass of Spiritualists hold the fallacious idea that a sceptical influence can hinder a séance. For it is not the lack of belief or disbelief of the one or few sceptics that weakens the influence. It is the mass belief of the whole circle in the hostile influence of the sceptic that does the harm.

After thinking matters over I decided that it might be wrong to prejudice Carthew by his undergraduate views. After all, some years had passed, and if every Oxford man held to the eccentric habits and beliefs of his puppy days the world would be a sorry place. I wrote to him asking him to dine with me at my club during the following week.

He had changed so much that when he entered the smoking room I did not recognize him. Tropical sunlight had bronzed and wrinkled his skin, his eyes had the clear hard steel-grey

fadedness of the blue iris that comes to men who have gazed long across deserts. Malaria had thinned down his form and his hands were big-veined and tremulous with quinine.

Over the meal he told me a good deal about his life abroad, and I realized something of the deadly loneliness of a white man's life in the dull oil fields of Mexico. Four other whites to speak to and for the rest native peons, Indians and a sprinkling of Chinese coolies.

A bottle of good wine is a splendid lubricant for the human tongue, and the Burgundy —a "Clos du Poi," '84—soon eased him of all awkwardness. Over the coffee and cigars he came to his point.

"You still go on with Spiritualism, don't you, Grey?"

"Yes," I answered him, "but I thought that you did not believe in it." His answer almost shocked me with its violence.

"God! but I wish that I did not!" He was silent with emotion for a moment, then resumed: "You know I never believed in it at the House. I always thought you fellows were simply running it as a craze, but up at Los

Chicharras—that was the third big oil gusher that the Company owned—there was a Cornish mining engineer, Bill Tregarthen.

"He was a queer fish, a silent man; squat-shaped, broad as he was long and full of queer fancies. He had a little planchette board that he used to consult about everything, and I have seen him sit there in the patio of the office building with the little jigger dancing about over reams of paper.

"I thought he was crazy, but he persuaded me to try the thing, *and I got messages, too.* One day it spelt out a message from Ellen, and Ellen has been dead for four years—she was my old nurse—Ellen——

"Even then I was only half convinced. One's brain plays one strange tricks down there in the Tierra Caliente, and I have seen an upturned mountain standing on its head in the desert—mirage of course, and I used to think the planchette mental mirage, subconscious stuff of some kind—and I didn't believe.

"Then Tregarthen used to laugh at me for a fool, and one night he blazed up into a strange bit of rage and stood there in the moonlight

shaking his fist at me. 'We Cornish folk have known the unwrit lore for all time,' said he. 'Old odd people we are and we know old odd things. I tell you. I will tell you that I am right when I am dead. You will not listen to me now, but you shall listen then, indeed.'

"Lots of the stuff he raved at us that night, but I and another man at last calmed him down and got him off to bed. I thought little enough of it at the time, and a week later I went back from Los Chicharras to the Offices at Tampico.

"I suppose it was a month later that I heard the first knock. It was past midday, right in the heart of the siesta hour. Not a soul moving, the very dogs silent in the streets, and the whole place a blinding blaze of sunlight.

"I knew at once—that's the odd thing about it. *I knew instantly in my heart that Tregarthen was dead.*

"That was six months ago, and since then I keep on hearing the raps. I know that Tregarthen is keeping his pledge, but I cannot answer him back; I cannot get into touch with him.

"Now tell me this—with all your knowledge of these things, can you help me?"

I asked him what he had done, and he told me a long chronicle of visits to mediums in New York, of an attempt to talk through a voodoo woman in New Orleans, and of honest, patient sittings in a little suburban circle in London.

Carthew was clearly desperate and absolutely in earnest. I knew without his telling me what was at the back of his mind.

The problem was a peculiar one, for here was a live man to all intents haunted by a malicious spirit now on another plane. Carthew's character was a strong one, though of a low and violent type. This mental persecution had produced a prodigious feeling of hatred for the dead man—a feeling of hatred that had not existed when he was alive, for then the hatred was all on Tregarthen's side.

There was also the possibility that the knock was pure hallucination and not a genuine clairaudient phenomenon at all.

I asked Carthew if he could give me particulars of how Tregarthen died, and I was not

surprised to learn that his end had been a violent one.

A small oil gusher had broken out as an offshoot from the larger one. In order to cut off the flow and waste of oil it is the practice to force a dynamite cartridge into these small leads. This when exploded breaks the natural channel of the oil and blocks the outlet.

Tregarthen, through an accident or carelessness—he was a deep drinker—had destroyed himself when preparing the charge.

I asked Carthew if he was prepared to attend a séance or two and if he would put himself completely in my hands. He assented readily, reasserting his dominant desire to be able to talk back to Tregarthen.

I was holding private séances twice a week then, but my little circle was, though powerful enough for research work, quite unsuitable for dealing with an abnormal case of undesired communication. During the week I got into touch with a private medium whose faculty of clairaudience was coupled with an excellent nervous system, and I reinforced the circle by the

addition of Dr. Miller,* who, though not a professed Spiritualist, is no sceptic concerning occult phenomena and is admittedly one of the most successful practitioners of curative psychology that we have to-day.

A few days later Carthew came to my chambers in the Temple and was introduced to the members of the circle. I placed him on the left-hand contact side of the medium and lowered the lights.

The medium engaged in this case was under double controls, one a spirit called "Louis," the other a rather elusive and intermittent control that answered to the name of "Montecatini."

The trance state was entered almost immediately and "Louis" took control. I asked him to find Tregarthen and he showed considerable reluctance, insisting that he was "not there." The control "Louis" was then dispossessed by "Montecatini," who answered in an entirely different voice and showed a distinct and separate personality.

* All names of people and places have been changed, but Dr. Miller's cures of "shell shock" during the war have shown that one's estimate of his powers was perfectly correct.

"I can find him," said Montecatini, and almost on the echo of the words a distinct audible rap came from the ceiling of the room.

Carthew recognized it instantly and flinched as if it were a personal blow at him.

"Have you got Tregarthen there?" I asked.

"No, they won't let him come here," was the answer.

"Why won't they let him come?"

"Afraid of him."

"Who is it rapping, then?"

"It's a sent rap for somebody. I didn't do it."

"Who is the rap for?"

"For the brown man." (Carthew was sunburnt.)

"He wants to speak to the spirit who sends it."

"He can't, it's from a bad spirit."

"But you said you could find Tregarthen."

"I have found him, but I can't bring him."

"Why not?"

"He is too heavy."

"What do you mean?"

"Too heavy—too low down—too much hatred."

"Can't Louis help you bring him?"

This was answered after a pause by the voice of Louis.

"We will try if you all help—but the brown man is hindering us."

I then determined to break the circle and set Carthew on a chair outside. "If you want to get through to Tregarthen," I told him, "you must subdue that hatred of yours. I am going to try for Tregarthen by the direct voice method."

I placed an ordinary gramophone trumpet on a light table within the circle, then we rejoined hands and concentrated.

"Can you get Tregarthen now?" I asked.

"Yes, he is coming—but he doesn't want to come."

"I want him to speak to us through the trumpet," I told them.

Almost immediately there were three knocks on the table close by the trumpet. Then the voice came out of the trumpet, not out of the medium, but it was the voice of Montecatini.

"He's a bad spirit and he won't talk," said the control.

"Ask him if he knows who's here?"

"Carthew!" blared the trumpet *in the voice of Tregarthen.*

I heard the crash of Carthew's chair falling back as he rose, and then his words:

"Tregarthen—at last!"

The trumpet chuckled at him, a hard sardonic chuckle, and it was a dreadful thing to hear.

"Stop that, Tregarthen," I said sharply. "Now listen to me. You must stop sending these knocks. You have proved to Carthew that you were right, and for the future there is no sense in it."

Again the trumpet began to chuckle.

"I want Carthew—here," said the voice of Tregarthen. "I want him to keep me company where I am now."

The medium began to writhe uneasily, and I suddenly realized that something dangerous had happened. The two normal controls, "Louis" and "Montecatini," whom we had sent to fetch Tregarthen's spirit, had disappeared

and Tregarthen himself had taken over control. Something of a spirit of uneasiness and a general sense of danger began to spread through the circle.

I called to Carthew to come into the circle again and to cross his hands, grasping my wrist and Miller's, so as not to break the chain when entering.

"Now man!" I told him, "here is your chance. We have Tregarthen here, and we will help you all we can. You must fight him with the whole of your will-power. Defy him, raise him to anger, and at the crucial point I will do something which will destroy his power over you for ever! Now!"

Carthew's grip burnt into my wrists as he took hold of himself, and then all the bitter, dominant hatred that was in the man flamed out.

He stood in the circle towering above us on our chairs and he poured into that trumpet a breadth of bilingual Spanish and English invective that would have led to murder anywhere.

He paused for breath and from the trumpet

came no chuckle, but a spluttering, stammering, furious attempt to reply. I had no need to prompt him to go on. He laced into his ghostly antagonist as if he had the earthly body there in front of him. All the pent-up hatred of the past months winged his words. The consciousness of his torment made his quarrel just, and at the height of his peroration I concentrated the whole of my psychic energies and made the four exorcism signs of the martinist ritual, bidding Tregarthen begone, never to return and never to be able to send a rap, and instantly broke the circle. I then roused the medium from the trance with a couple of simple passes.

The reaction from the violence of the séance left us all spent and shaken. The medium recovered, remembering nothing, but feeling unusually exhausted. Later experiments with her showed that the domination by the Tregarthen control was purely temporary and that "Louis" and "Montecatini" had reasserted command.

My own opinion is that nothing but the intense "hate concentration" of Carthew toward his ghostly antagonist could have enabled Tregarthen to assume control at all.

It was a duel of wills between the living and the dead, fought over the narrow no-man's land of the earth and spirit planes, and I am not sure that it was not a duel which ended fatally for the soul of Tregarthen. Carthew at any rate was free of all trouble afterwards, but wild horses could not drag him to a séance.

Miller was more convinced by this astonishing séance than by far more material phenomena that he had seen. The following day, though, he sent me an explanation of the whole affair argued out on his own lines. He held that Carthew was the subject of an obsession and that the whole of the phenomena were due to subconscious hypnotism of the medium alternatively by me as a believer in Spiritualism and by Carthew.

The direct voice he ascribed to unconscious or subconscious ventriloquism by the medium, and he pointed out that the words uttered by Tregarthen were precisely what one would expect Carthew to say if Carthew were in Tregarthen's place. In other words, we were present at an amazing duel between Carthew's conscious mind and an obsession of his subcon-

scious mind that had built itself into a malignant identity.

It is interesting as a psychological theory, but in point of fact I hold it to be entirely wrong. We argued it out a good deal together, but experiments in psychic science can seldom be repeated, and, as I say, Carthew refused to submit to any further attempt to evoke Tregarthen.

As a man I sympathize with him, and he was really very grateful to us—but as a scientist I would have liked to try again in order to attempt to convince Miller.

CHAPTER II

THE AUTOMATIST

A WELL-KNOWN psychic investigator once jokingly complained to me that the telephone service of the spirit world seemed to be as unreliable and badly damaged as that of Great Britain. Certainly, communication is often freakish and intermittent, and the ethical value of the teachings received at great length and painstakingly transcribed is often completely valueless.

It must be remembered that we who are conducting research in psychic matters have a poor range of instruments or tools to work with. There must inevitably be the human medium, and long experience has taught me that in the case of automatic writing one must be prepared to recognize the intrusion of the medium's own thought-processes into the record received from the spirit world.

That these interpolated writings are conscious

frauds by the mediums we can unhesitatingly deny, but they appear to be either unconscious records of the medium's own thoughts or else the re-transmitted subconscious thought-processes of the medium echoed back by the control.

I have hopes that in the future we shall be able to devise an appliance for the recording of automatic writing in which the function of the medium will be purely that of a bridge between the two planes and in which the physical act of writing will be mechanically performed.*

The difficulty in automatic writing lies in the association of ideas, and one word written by a planchette or spelt out by an ouija traverser leads to the stimulation of a train of thought in the subconscious mind even though the conscious brain may be in the trance state.

* I carried out a long series of experiments with the idea of developing an automatic recorder operating on the lines of the familiar tape machine, and experimented at length both in London and in Paris, where my work was done in connection with the student Du Plessis, who was one of the heroes who gave his life at Verdun. Latterly we abandoned the idea of an actual print-registering machine for a device designed to register impulses on a wax cylinder, something on the lines of a phonograph. Some results were obtained, but the machine was not successful or reliable.

The difficulty is to piece together what can be termed the true spirit messages out of the mass of pseudo-communications that surround them. The analysis of the familiar examples of "cross-correspondence" are a valuable guide in the complexities that are involved in the question.

A popular idea of the difficulty of communication can be gained by imagining a man in a telephone exchange in London trying to talk to Newcastle. He can go from instrument to instrument and speak through, but all the instruments keep on going out of order, so that only disconnected fragments of communication pass over one wire.

This would not matter if the person with whom he wishes to talk were also in an exchange at Newcastle. He, too, could pass to other instruments, but we must imagine the mortal recipient of spirit messages as a subscriber with only one defective instrument.*

* It is a saddening and depressing thought to think of a recently passed over spirit racing from medium to medium in an attempt to get through bits of messages to an individual on this plane. The spirit of F. W. H. Myers had to communicate through mediums as distant as Mrs. Holland in India and Mrs. Verrall at Cambridge. Later communications were received in complex fashion from other sources and the

Difficult as the subject of automatic writing is, it is from these writings that the Spiritualist conception of life in the next world is gleaned.

Many a student has found eloquent, fluent, and convincing description of the life beyond the veil flow from his pen when the spirit controls were working well. Other writers have had accounts of terrors beyond the veil: shocking and astonishing revelations of new concepts of evil, exotic violences of the soul, and even direct incitements to the commission of criminal acts in this plane.

Spiritualists are accustomed to divide these spirits into classes of good and bad, and it has been assumed on all too slender grounds that only the "good" spirits tell the truth about the other planes.

There are bad and lying spirits, just as there are wicked and untruthful men, but latterly there has been a distinct tendency to suppress all mention of the bad communicators and to attempt the organization of Spiritualist 'and

whole had to be collected by the Research Officer of the S.P R. before they made any sense at all. *Proceedings S.P.R.*, Vols. XX to XXV inclusive.

psychic investigation as an unorthodox ascending sect organized as a distinct church or religious body. This tendency would be fatal to the progress of occult investigation.

The professional mediums, on the other hand, realize that to attain financial success, organization, and the establishment of a mediumistic hierarchy is essential. Bad spirits are bad business and it is bad form to mention them outside certain circles.

Any investigator of experience will recognize at once that the spirits of suicides are frequent communicators to private research circles, private automatists and others, but it is an undeniable fact that in public circles our leading exponents now never admit that any of the spirits who communicate have been anything but mortals whose end was normal, or more recently, those who were killed in battle.

There is more in Spiritualism than the mere assurance to inquiries that life on the other side is very beautiful, that vocations similar to those on earth are followed there and that there is a steady upward progression.

These things dominate the minds of a certain

section of the English Spiritualists, and their tacit negation of the other darker side of the revelations is entirely contrary to French, Russian, and certain Latin-American schools of thought.

The history of all religions and analysis of their tenets reveal one great outstanding fact. There has always been an element of fear and terror connected with all conceptions of the after-life. There is nothing in revealed Spiritualism to suggest that abstract justice is more prevalent on the next plane than on this imperfect earth. The very fact of the admitted existence of bad and evil spirits capable of malice, is in itself fatal to the bed of rose-leaves theories.

In science it is the abnormal properties of a new gas, compound, or element that lead scientists to study it, so in the realm of psychic science it is only through close study of the abnormal that we can attain to any clear idea of the normal.

It has been cast at me as a reproach that I have pursued vain and extraordinary paths of research, not disdaining to delve into dark se-

crets of occultist ritual whose proceedings would be unorthodox and blasphemous if laid bare to the orthodox and anæmic Spiritualist circles of Balnam.

Yet Shamonnism is Spiritualism, and the old schools of sorcery and art magic held psychic secrets that are still reproducible but yet inexplicable in these twentieth-century days.

One of the most wonderful automatists I ever met was the late Jules Carrier. A tall, spare figure, black-bearded, aquiline-nosed, vividly pale in complexion, he had dark hazel eyes with brown mottled rings about the pupil that suggested in a vague way something feline or leopard-like.

I met him quite by chance in a bookshop in the Rue de Valenciennes whose proprietor had written to me about some curious early nineteenth-century manuscripts that had come into his possession.

These books consisted of some rather commonplace manuscripts of certain philosophical transactions dealing with occult phenomena. Paris in the early thirties of the last century was seamed with secret organizations devoted

to scientific and political studies. The great impulse of the Revolution had produced in turn Napoleon and then the Bourbon reaction. The strong arm of the clerical party drove the philosophers underground, and only from time to time can one find these peculiar archives of occultist activity in odd booksellers' shops and the libraries of students.

The proprietor of the shop knew my interest in these matters and had before been at pains to secure me certain personal souvenirs from his library of Eliphas Levi,* so whenever an odd "Grimoire" or early matter on occultism fell to his lot he would put it by against my next visit.

He it was who introduced Carrier to me as a fellow-student, but he made it abundantly clear that Carrier was too poor to be a book buyer and that he himself looked on him as a peculiar acquaintance rather than as a customer.

We fell into conversation, and I was delighted to find that Carrier had a wide and erudite knowledge of early books on magical practice.

* The library and papers of Alphonse Louis Constant are, I believe, still in existence but inaccessible.

This he told me he had gained principally by spare-time study at the Librairie de Paris, but also from the loan of books from friends. He had, it appeared, catalogued several private collections of works on psychic and supernormal subjects.

I took him off to lunch with me at the Café Bastien, and he explained that he was completing a catalogue or bibliography of books on magic published previously to 1850. "There are," said he, "a number of missing works referred to by contemporary authors. Of these there is little knowledge, but little by little I am rewriting them."

"Automatic writing or original deductive work?" I asked him.

"Automatic—*pur et simple,*" he replied. "My control is called Fernand de Féques and was a monk of the Abbey of Saint-Barnabe near Blagues. Thanks to his help, I have recovered amazing things that were lost."

He sank his voice as he told me and his leopard eyes seemed to glow golden as the wine in his glass. "I know the secrets of the lost inner ritual of the Illuminati," he told me. "I have

recovered Pietro Zarantino's invocation, and could I only master ancient Greek I could lay the secrets of the Bacchæ bare. But their confused script paralyses my hand and I must keep to French and Latin."

I knew too much of the vast breadth and heritage of knowledge that the Hermetic philosophers inherited from the Gnostics to doubt his words. Revealed knowledge may sometimes appear to be withdrawn for a while, but it will inevitably be re-disclosed.

Having an appointment to keep, I made a note of his address and promised to resume our acquaintanceship on another day.

A week later I had had leisure to go through my manuscripts. They were very interesting, but verbose, and were full of curiously involved obliquities of meaning and contained some peculiar Hebrew charms of Kabbalistic significance. By either bad luck or the design of some earlier owner, two pages of the invocatory ritual for the raising of the spirits of the dead were missing.

It occurred to me that Carrier might be able to fill the gap by means of automatic writing,

so I wrote to him suggesting the attempt and asking him to my rooms. He replied by return, expressing his willingness to help, and adding that his control had assented, but desired me to visit him in his own rooms in order that he might not be disturbed by novel surroundings.

The next night I went to Carrier's. He lived in one of those dull meandering streets that rise from the mass of the city toward Montparnasse. The house was an old tumble down warren, dirty and ill-kept, the various floors let out in rooms or suites of apartments to tenants who were none too particular in their choice of lodging. By the light of a match I examined the grimy cards pinned in the hallway, and at last located Carrier's name as owner of the back room on the third floor.

He opened to my knock and I found myself in a room which made no pretension to disguise the poverty of its tenant. Most of his furniture was books. A globeless gas jet burnt feebly over a side table on which were some dishes and there was an old and uncleanly box bed in the corner. In the centre of the room was a heavy old fashioned circular pedestal table and on this

he had laid out glasses, a bottle of wine, and paper.

He showed me his books, and for a while we discussed Guldenstubbé.* I looked at some of his automatic writings that gave interpretations of some aspects of Etteilla and was in particular interested in a new rendering of his Book of Thotn.†

In the meantime Carrier was glancing through the imperfect MS. that I had brought with me.

"This is rather different from most of the books of the period," said he. "It is more like a note-book of lectures or a précis of an existing magical ritual as performed by a small child. What do you make of it?"

"That is just how it struck me," I told him. "It is about the period of the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. The writer might have been one of the adepts trained by Francis Barret, by Cagliostro, or by Dom Gerle, but it might even be as late as Madame Lenormand."

* Baron de Guldenstubbé. *La Réalité des Esprits et le Phénomène Merveilleux de leur Ecriture Directe.* 1857.

† *Les Sept Nuances de l'Œuvre Philosophique Hermétique.* Leçons Théoriques et Pratique du Livre de Thotn. 1786.

"Hardly 1815, I think," said Carrier, "but no matter. The interesting thing is that this writer seems to have shorn his ritual of lots of the inessential matters. For instance, in this matter of the invocation of simple elements he has resolutely reduced his formula to mere essentials. Two kinds of the wearisome Hebrew prayers are gone and the actual mechanical adjuncts to the invocation are simplified.

"His consecrations too are limited simply to the repetition of words of power. This man had in his way reduced his art magic to what one may term working formulæ."

"Sometime I will experiment with them," I told him, "but for the present let us see if we can recover the ritual on the missing pages."

Carrier soon passed under control. His mouth seemed to fall slack and open in rather ghastly fashion and the eyeballs turned up under the lids so that though he wrote with half-opened eyes only the blue-tinted white of the eyeballs could be seen under his heavy lids. His hand and forearm began to twitch spasmodically, but the pencil stayed almost immobile on the paper forming a little knot of scratches, but no letters.

Finally I saw that he had completely entered the trance state and was directly under control.

"Who is the author of these manuscripts?" I asked.

Without a pause the pencil wrote rapidly in a sharp angular script: "Marcel Theot, Adept and Minor Master of the Arcana."

"Under whom did you study?"

"Under the divine Giuseppe Balsamo Count Cagliostro, the Grand Copt of the Universe, and later under Doctor Jules Lemercier pupil of Lavater and Cagliostro."

"Will you reveal to us the missing pages of your manuscript?" The answer was unexpected.

"To you two," the pencil wrote, "I can reveal these secrets, for you too are initiate and know what progress is permitted to the children of men. This I say unto you. In the third decade of this century shall there be a revival of art magic, but much that has been sealed to the philosophers shall be known to the healers of men." *

* This would seem to point to the present research in psychology and psychotherapeutics and its applications to cases of "shell shock" and kindred mental disturbances.

The control revealed a complete and up-to-date knowledge of movements in the world of psychic research and the refrain of the communications was ever the same. "These things were known before, but mankind had not the sense to apply the doctrines and practice."

At length the control took up the actual communication of the missing portion of the ritual and Carrier's automatic script changed entirely from his own angular, large-lettered, trim, and straggly lettering to the staid precise well-formed handwriting of the original manuscript.

All went well until it came to the names of God, which had to be written in Hebrew characters in the corners of the triangle within the pentagon of the president of the air. Carrier's hand struggled with the attempt to produce the letters, but the characters would not form. There was a moment of indecision, and then I saw hovering over the table a small lambent sphere of bluish light.

The room, remember, was lighted by a gas jet and we were not in darkness, but clear and distinct the flickering globe of blue light formed

over the table, then descended to wrap round Carrier's hand and pencil.

With it there seemed to come an impression of intense cold, then there formed within the light a plainly visible hand bearing a curiously wrought talismanic ring. This hand took the pencil and wrote the names in Hebrew characters VEVAHLIAH, ANIEL, and MUMIAH, then withdrew again.

While the rest of the ritual was being written the globe of light into which the hand had redissolved hovered over the table, but at the end of the script when Carrier's hand fell idle it returned and materializing again wrote in bold script in ordinary Latin characters:

"The dead ye will summon, but Nahemah will answer, for I too am a creature of the fire and it is only on the underplanes that I command."

Once again the globe of fire redissolved the hand, then the whole ascending toward the ceiling appeared to expand, dissipate and vanish away. Carrier came round and I boiled him up a glass of hot water, which, with a liberal

dash of wine, soon restored him to himself.

Together we went over the script while I told him of the curious phenomenon that I had witnessed.

"That may account for the way my hand is aching," he said. "I thought it was more than usual," and spreading his hand out in front of him we both noticed for the first time that both the first joint of the thumb and the nail and first joint of the forefinger were actually swollen and bruised.

"This Marcel Theot seems to be a terrible fellow," said he ruefully.

"It is the last part of the message that he has attached to the ritual that puzzles me," I said. "Assuming that he is actually a bad spirit, he yet seems to be able to repeat the construction of a protective circle of exorcism in which the names of God are frequently repeated and which is in itself supposed to be demon-proof and then warns us that Nahemah will answer. Nahemah is the spirit queen who presides over the female devils of obsession—the Succubi. Thus Carrier, my friend, I do not quite see what to expect."

"The Succubi," said Carrier, "are known to be able to assume the forms of the most desirable of women. This Marcel Theot studied thaumaturgy and magic under Cagliostro and his followers, and you know to what amazing practices the Grand Copt set his female devotees. It is probable that the invocation in its peculiarly condensed style opens the doors to dangers that are not present when the full ritual is applied. You notice that he styles himself minor master."

I agreed, and later analysis of the ritual as compared to others showed that in the process of condensation many of the safeguarding ceremonies and propitiatory invocations had been discarded.

My own opinion is that Marcel Theot was one of that numerous class of people who undertook the study of magic only in order to obtain the supernatural qualification of carnal desires. In any case I have deemed his ritual unsafe for experiment and have taken steps so that it can never fall into unsuitable hands.

The actual materialism of a spirit hand to aid

automatic writing is such an unusual occurrence that to my mind it completely disposes of any theory of other than spirit knowledge being applied in this particular case.

CHAPTER III

ASTRAL LIGHT AND THE PSYCHO-LASTROMETER

One of the commonest phenomena associated with Spiritualism is the production of light. Many mediums possess this power of attracting or emitting light and even small circles where there is in truth little enough Light in the true psychic sense, yet produce this, the most elementary of the phenomena.

It is possibly because it is so easy to induce light phenomena of various kinds that the production of any form of spirit luminosity has been, so to speak, taken at face value as a criterion of *goodness*.

In actual point of fact at least two-thirds of the light manifestations seen at Séances may be classed as dubious and a portion of them are more than dubious, they are malevolent manifestations.

To this blind belief in the "goodness" of spirit light in itself we may trace certain disastrous

mental calamities that have overtaken too trustful searchers. The myth springs possibly from an acceptance of early Bible teachings and a desire to identify these manifestations with the Pentecostal tongues of fire and similar analogies. But among the mass of humble practitioners of Spiritualism who follow the path of the Light are many that are mistaking astral evils for psychic good.

To the average Spiritualist the success of a small circle in the production of spirit lights is a heartening message from the spirit world. It is a testimony that life-after-death endures, and as such the phenomena are welcomed as spirit visitors, sometimes identified as actual spirit forms, and no doubt is raised in the minds of those present concerning the innate and essential "goodness" of the visitation.

In order to avoid confusion I shall use the term astral light to describe the usual spirit light.

The light phenomena are customarily associated with the dark or semi-dark séance because in the full light of day or under normal

conditions of artificial light it is almost impossible to see the astral light at all, unless one is clairvoyant or unless the concentration of spirit force is so marked that there is no possibility of mistaking it.

The normal appearance of astral light is that of indefinite globular or pear-shaped masses of faint phosphorescence. These appear near sitters or on objects in the room and frequently move about, wax and wane, or gather into clouds before a materialism or in support of a particular effort.*

In other cases they take the form of direct rays and in certain individuals have been known to occur as flashes like dull electric discharges. Another not uncommon form is the projection from the body of a distinctly defined aura or radiation of light which is faintly luminous like the gases in a Geissler tube subjected to oscillant discharges.

We must go far back into history and indeed beyond the bounds of history before we can come to a time when this manifestation of light was

* *Notes of an Enquiry into the Phenomena Called Spiritual.* William Crookes, F.R.S., p. 91; Class VIII: Luminous Appearances.

not one part of the common stock in trade of the thaumaturge or wonder worker.

The manipulation and control of astral light phenomena were part of the religious mysteries of the magicians of Chaldea who transmitted the secret knowledge to the seers of Egypt. We find it in the myth of the luminous bull in the Greek mysteries and again as an attribute of the great healer Apollonius of Tyana. This mysterious radiance plays equal parts in the records of the lives of the saints and in the terrible archives of the trials for sorcery.

Confusion exists because to the untrained eye of mankind all forms of astral light are identical.

The greater proportion of the astral light seen by circles is that generated and given off by the human mental energy of the circle itself. The spirit-forms are all too often thought-forms built up out of the liberated psychoplasm or thought-matter given off by sitters.

The physical nature of this psychoplasm has so far defied all attempts at scientific research, but it appears to be something more substantial than the mere emission of vibrations that it is

commonly held to be. It appears to be an all-penetrating imponderable emanation which dissipates rapidly, but which under certain conditions is capable of being energized by the intelligence of the living or by discarnate intelligence. Under these conditions it becomes luminous and under certain further conditions can be used as the vehicle for the transmission of force.

It can best be realized as being to the mind what ectoplasm * is to the body of the medium, but the precise limitations of both the astral body-matter-ectoplasm, and astral mind-matter psychoplasm are not yet ascertained.

It is a conceivable hypothesis that both are functions of the vast unknown mechanism of the subconscious self, but where the capacity for the projection of ectoplasm is rare, the emission of psychoplasm is the basis of most Spiritualist phenomena.

It is to this radiation of psychoplasm that we must look for the explanation of such a simple thing—and at the same time such a com-

* For details concerning ectoplasm see *Ghosts in Solid Form*, Gambier Bolton, etc.

plex thing—as psychic atmosphere. Do we not all know the peculiar atmosphere which surrounds individuals and places? The phenomena associated with apparitions have been ascribed to the penetration of structure by violently liberated psychoplasm set free in moments of passion and bloody violence. There too is the clue to its physical source, for in some obscure way blood and the emanations from blood play a vital and important part in psychic matters.

Under normal circumstances psychoplasm is dissipated and the liberated energy that animated it goes with it to return in the normal way of the cycle of life. Under other circumstances the psychoplasm retreats back into the mind whence it came, just as the materialized ectoplasm is reabsorbed into the body of the medium.

The dangers latent in assuming all astral light phenomena to be "good" can be realized when it is considered what may occur to the projected psychoplasm which is emotionally liberated beyond the confines of the body and beyond its living human control.

A party of some half-dozen form a circle in

some provincial city. They may know one another well or they may be, comparatively speaking, strangers. However well they may know the public lives of the members of the circle, can they fathom the secret soul of each sitter? Can they say whose mind is a garden of purity or who may have some tendency to some unknown enormity?

Yet it is precisely this weakness that makes a soul-appalling danger of the hideous mental promiscuity that is one of the essential things of which all the more ingenuous and simple believers and a few clever evil hypocrites among Spiritualists make a cult.

They may unknowingly include among themselves an individual, man or woman, who has somewhere a secret kink—a mental leaning—it need not be an actually accomplished physical fact—but simply an inclination to the obscene, the evil, or the cruel.

The circle launches its prayer, concentrates on the attraction of the discarnate spirits of those who have passed over—and what comes, who comes?

There is no gifted Spiritualist or student of

matters psychic who has not had either personal or absolutely credible second-hand experience of the existence of bad or lying spirits. It is true that insistence upon their existence has latterly become unfashionable in Spiritualist circles—because it does harm to the professional medium, but not even the most insistent of suppressive propaganda can live down the writings and testimonies of the past and the ever-recurrent undeniable phenomena of the present.

It is not too much to say that in nine cases out of ten where a crude and humble belief in Spiritualism is put in practice by a circle of operators whose standard of education and intellectual attainment is low, the etherealization of the psychoplasm of the believers is mistaken for the materialization of the spirit.*

So much for the visible luminous appearances of astral light. Now let us consider the range of probabilities that may affect these. It must be borne in mind that it is the process of their reabsorption into the sitters after being charged

* Something of this view may be found in the chapter on "Pseudo Spirit Phenomena" in *Borderland of Psychical Research*, H. J. Hyslop. A book deserving of attention by all interested in Spiritualism.

with outside influences that introduces the element of danger.

Psychologists know that certain fixed laws govern mental processes. There is the Law of Similarity, which evokes the association of ideas; there is the Law of Integration, which splits memories and picture memories into integral fragments; and there is the Law of Red-integration, which enables the subconscious mind to reassemble the part memories into one completed picture of a past scene or event.

The astral light, once beyond the control of the sitter, is at the command of (1) stronger human wills in the circle, (2) the lower or baser forms of discarnate intelligence, (3) spirits of ex-mortals, (4) higher spirits.

It is the dominance of the human will that is the first positive danger. Part of the accepted dogma of Spiritualism is that hostile or unbelieving influences are antagonistic to the spirits. This is by no means accurate, but can be classed for practical purposes as a half-truth. The state of mental concentration and muscular relaxation that is necessary to the séance bears a close and analogous resemblance to the state

of consent that the hypnotist demands of his subject.

The first requisite of the Spiritualist is the question put to him or her by others of the cult.

"Do you believe in Spiritualism?"

The honest sceptic, the unreasoning man-in-the-street observer is soon converted by evidence, then faith in the inexplicable wonders of Spiritualism is born.

In other words the mind of the neophyte accepts the whole loose doctrine of Spiritualism and is prepared to believe that all phenomena are due to spirit influence, and does not attempt to further analyse the accepted spirit influence.

The mental or emotional state produced by the participation of a devout believer in a séance, leaves the mind receptive of ideas, and the ideas received back into the mind are those impressed upon the psychoplasm that is liberated and is visible as astral light and is reabsorbed into its sources after it has been beyond the control of its originator's consciousness.

In a circle of ten or fewer people where the sexes are mixed, it is impossible to say what

suppressed desires may be latent in the minds of those who compose it. Even in the case of circles confined to one sex alone there is the possibility of sex perversion being a secretly dominant mental force in the mind of someone there.

It is an inexorable law that the conscious or subconscious will of the most powerful and determined member of the circle dominates the minds of the others through its influence on the psychoplasm or astral light.

Even without the knowledge of the dominant influence his or her will or thought-force emission will gain mastery over those of the others, and if there is any violent sex disturbance at the bottom of the dominant will, this will be communicated to the others or to the selected other furthering the desire.

The next stage occurs where passion or desire on the part of one member of the circle for another is absent. Despite repeated statements that the desire of the members of the circle is to meet pure spirits, there may be members whose secret wishes are not those of the pathway of light. Love for those who have passed over

may be still carnal love in the hearts of those who remain. Abélard may have passed beyond passion into the realm of death, but Héloïse may refuse his plea of impossibility and still pursue in the spirit that which escaped her in the flesh.

Carnality is not confined to this plane nor does it cease upon the next, but the endeavour of mortals to get in touch with the spirit world while there is latent in them either known or suppressed, and unrecognized desire is fatal.

Every sexual desire the mind has experienced is indexed or pigeon-holed in the recesses of the subliminal mind. People whose conscious mind is free of any vestige of such desire may go to a séance and under the influence of the emotional forces of a séance liberate all the repressed energy of their past ungratified sexual desires—without knowing it.

These forces attract low-grade spirits some of whom have never been human and the lowest and most vicious of spirits whose human lives have been a cycle of debauchery. Like attracts like, is one of the laws of Nature. The Law of Similarity is one of the rules of psychology.

The gateways of the soul are thrown open

not to whoever may enter in, but with an explicit mental invitation to those spirits that derive gratification from the lusts and desires of mortals.

The whole body of the psychoplasm of a circle is at the mercy of the mind of the individual to whose call the spirits come.

The practical results of these open-house invitations to the spirits are devastating. The ideas of gratification become rooted not in the conscious mind but in the subconscious mind, where they work slowly but inevitably to the subversion of conscious "good."

The first step toward possession and obsession are often the result of séances, where Truth has been sought with the tongue and Evil within the heart of one present. It is not the guilty alone who suffer, but the weak and innocent who sit beside them.

There are no bounds to the malignancy of the impure spirits. They are sly and notable liars—they can assume the form of mortals who have passed over and they can assume personality and knowledge that was known to the dead. By degrees they inculcate evil, predisposing the

victim to accept and yield to evil in particular forms. Frequently they proceed by slow stages, advising and inspiring savage asceticism, but seizing each stage of natural reaction from this unnatural régime to further subvert their victim in wantonness.

The obvious need is for some method of distinguishing between good and bad projections of astral light.

To the human eye alone there is no means of distinguishing between the etherealizations of the psychoplasm of the believer and the identical luminous phenomena which occur when there is a materialization of the actual spirit. It is there that psychic science can come to our assistance.

The fluorescent bodies zinc sulphide, barium platino-cyanide, and the preparation known as Sidot's hexagonal blonde, are all intensely susceptible to radioactivity. The rays of radioactive bodies have the peculiar property of being able to penetrate the ether, and the mass of spirit teaching tells us that this property is also common to the disembodied spirits of those who have passed to other planes.

The relative purity or potency of astral lights

may be readily ascertained by their effect upon a simple instrument that I have named the Psycho-Lastrometer.

This instrument is both cheap and easy to make in the simple form in which I first used it. The later applications which make it a registering instrument in addition to being a mere indicator are necessarily costly, but these are only necessary to the expert investigator and are of no value to the mere seeker after proof or those who seek communion with the spirits of the dead for the purposes of solace, quasi-religious conviction, or vulgar curiosity.

To make a crude psycho-lastrometer all that is necessary is a wide-mouthed glass jar whose walls should not be more than two millimetres thick. The height of the jar should be some eight inches, the width in proportion three and a quarter inches.

I have found that an ordinary lipped beaker of Bohemian glass such as is readily obtainable from any maker of laboratory apparatus is admirably suited to the purpose.

The neck of this jar must be fitted with a large cork or wooden bung the whole of which is

covered with tinfoil. The centre of this cork should be pierced by a piece of brass wire five inches long, bent at one end to form a hook. This end is inside the jar and from the hook hangs the plate of the lastrometer. To the projecting end of the brass wire outside the jar should be soldered a circular collecting disc of brightly polished brass or tinplate three inches in diameter. This should stand up vertically to the axis of the wire, being thus on edge instead of forming a flat table.

The plate of the lastrometer consists of a rectangle of thin aluminum two and half inches wide by four inches deep. Half an inch from the top edge three slits should be cut in the metal so that a portion of a magnetized knitting needle three inches long may be threaded through the breadth of the plate, projecting half an inch on each side.

This needle forms a cross bar at the top of the plate and should be accurately adjusted so that the broad surface of the plate is always in the same plane as the axis of the needle.

To the projecting ends of the needle is secured a loop of copper wire four inches long whose

other end is made fast to the other end of the needle and whose centre passes over the hooked end of the wire through the cork. The plate thus swings like a miniature signboard suspended from the hook.

The surface of one side of the plate is now painted with several successive layers of a saturated solution of gum arabic in one ounce of water to which has been added one and a half drachms of luminous zinc sulphide or Sidot's preparation (preferably the latter) and one liquid drachm of a ten per cent. solution of barium platino-cyanide. The other side of the plate should be painted with "optical black" or any other suitable dead black varnish.

Between the edge of the bung and the central wire should be inserted at convenient intervals three or four sections of glass tubing whose internal bore exceeds half an inch. These serve to admit external influences to the interior of the lastrometer.

When complete it will be found that the plate of the lastrometer is highly fluorescent and can be energized into greater activity by exposure to sun or artificial light. It is desirable that

the plate should be kept in a state of relatively low radiancy, as otherwise spirit agency cannot raise its luminous powers to a higher degree.

At a séance the instrument should be placed within the circle and the jar rotated till the magnetized needle can oscillate freely in its natural position pointing toward the North and South Poles.

Concentrations of genuine spirit force will raise the luminosity of the plate to double and treble its normal output of light. When the force is concentrated in the lastrometer, questions can be answered by the spirits by signaling in Morse or simple code by rotating the plate through an angle of 90° against the surface force of the magnet.*

* The psycho-lastrometer was further perfected. The element selenium is inordinately sensitive to all forms of light rays and according to the light thrown upon it permits more or less electric current to pass. I arranged the apparatus so that the light thrown out by the psycho-lastrometer impinged upon a selenium cell whose resistance varied from 50,000 ohms to 100,000 ohms, which was in its turn connected to a cell and to a Deprex d'Arsonval mirror galvanometer. This enables accurate readings of the actual waxings and wanings of the light value of the lastrometer plate to be taken, and entirely eliminates any possibility of visual illusion seeming to make the plate more luminous than before. A series of plotted curves based on time abscissæ and light co-ordinates will give an accurate scientific record of any differences in the radiant value of the plate that occur during the séance.

It may be urged that this apparatus is not fraud-proof and that it would respond to certain agencies such as the concealment of an electromagnet in the room. To this it may be answered that an ordinary pocket compass placed on the table by the lastrometer would also respond to these forces and the fraud would be transparent to any observer.

So far as I can tell, no human mental effort conscious or subconscious can affect this simple instrument. It is necessary to guard against illusion by imagining that the lastrometer is gaining radiance, and to this end it is advisable to prepare a stand and test-piece made of aluminum and coated with precisely the same solution as is applied to the plate. These should always be kept together and allowed to become equally radiant. If this is placed on the table near the lastrometer, any variations in the latter can be rapidly verified by comparison with the non-insulated and non-oriented test-piece.

Antipathy on the part of the presiding medium to the use of the psycho-lastrometer is invariably a bad sign. Spirit messages objecting to it are the most valid reasons for its re-

tention, and such communications should be viewed with the deepest suspicion. The cost of the apparatus is a few shillings, it can be made by anybody in an hour or so of spare time, and in actual point of fact there is nothing about it that is offensive to the spirits of "good" or to the pure.

To those who are learned in symbolism I may suggest that the receiving disc at the top of the wire need not be in the form of a disc, but can be cut or pierced with ornament such as sacred symbols or with any decorative design.

It is desirable, however, that the light surface be retained and that the available metallic surface of the disc should not be diminished more than is necessary.

CHAPTER IV

AN EXPERIMENT ON THE THEORY OF PROTECTIVE VIBRATION

Ghost phenomena do not come into the province of practising Spiritualism. The average Spiritualist is content to follow the Catholic doctrine of offering up a few devout prayers for the rest of the uneasy spirit should circumstances throw him into contact with it. Apparitions as a whole affect the Spiritualist with as much unreasoning terror as falls to the lot of the non-Spiritualist mortal.

The chance-met apparition of the dead is after all a fairly common phenomenon. The theory of the veridic apparition of the recently dead is explainable by various hypotheses, but there is little reason to suppose that the human spirit still animates the astral body that appears.

The luminous quality or phosphorescence of astral light that enwraps the astral body of the apparition is not necessarily a proof of the sur-

vival of the identity of the soul whose astral body appears. The phosphorescent radiance associated with certain kinds of fish survives the death of the organism, and luminous bodies or glands extracted from these creatures may be preserved for months after death and still retain elements of luminosity.

The thinking Spiritualist does not disregard the lessons and analogies of science. The great names in the history of Spiritualism have been those of scientists like Lodge and Crookes,* and it has ever been their desire to translate the apparent miracles of the supernatural into no less miraculous but more deeply understood parallels with the natural.

The great slogan of Spiritualism is that it is a perfectly natural understandable thing; thus is it the duty of every Spiritualist to reduce those things which non-Spiritualistic thought deems supernatural to the realms of the understood, the explained and the known,—in a word, to the state of the natural.

* Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is perhaps to-day an even greater name. But he is not a scientist and is greater as a publicist than as a healer despite his medical degree. But then too—all the Apostles were not of one trade.

It is no good to tell a materialistic world that owing to the intervention of spirit force mechanical results contrary to all natural laws were obtained. The sceptic, and above all the logical sceptic—who is the easiest of all to convert, can you but once bring him to see the fallacies that underlie his logic—demands proof, proof not in terms of second-hand evidence, but proof in terms of cold matter-of-fact science.

The missionary effort of Spiritualism must be made a crusade not into the minds of the unintelligent but straight into the citadels of reason of the men of science. It is necessary first of all to demonstrate the spirit forces and then to *prove* that they are forces of the spirit and not natural, so far as the meaning of the term "natural" may be held to imply limitation to the physical laws governing this mortal earth.

The spirit realm is the realm of the ether, the boundless range of unknown interstellar space. Blindly, gropingly, the men of science are putting out feelers—theories—pragmatical assumptions that serve them as laws. Little by little it is being recognized that the physics of the

ether is the underlying superscientific structure of modern Spiritualism. Little by little their discoveries fall into harmony with our claims, and we must look upon science as the handmaiden rather than the antagonist of our truth.

The theories of apparition that are held vary according to the classification of the apparition. There are numerous instances of apparitions of the living * and there is an infinite mass of data concerning veridical apparitions of the dead. A statistical analysis of 17,000 cases collected by Society for Psychical Research resulted in the finding by the Committee that "Between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connexion exists which is not due to chance alone." †

A clear distinction must, however, be drawn between apparitions which may appear to relatives, friends, and acquaintances, and then disappear for ever, and those definite and persistently recurring apparitions that go by the name of haunts.

The terminology of matters psychic is loose and inexact, but it is well to have a clear mental

* *Proceedings S.P.R.*
† *Ibid.*, Vol. X, p. 394.

distinction between the occasional "apparition" and the periodic or repeating "ghost."

For purposes of scientific investigation the casual apparition is almost valueless, but the established ghost is the nearest approximation that we can get to a serious test standard for experimental purposes.

There are in England at least half a dozen ghosts whose periodical manifestations are regular enough to serve as test instances. The genuine ghost is so rare that from the point of view of psychical research it is vitally important that the haunt should not be harried by every party of sensation-avid amateurs who think they would "like to see a ghost." The amateur exorcists, the psychically gifted ladies, and all the ragtag and bobtail of well-meaning idiots that disturb a haunt once it becomes known, can only be compared to a set of egg-stealing, bird-scaring boys who invade a woodland sanctuary and destroy the fruition of the work of a painstaking observer of nature who has been recording the life of the rare birds.

In parenthesis it may be remarked that if the ghost is a full-blooded manifestation it will

take more than the well-meaning effort of some anæmic amateur psychic to lay it. The very last person who should go near a violent ghost is anyone whose capacity for mediumship is in any way developed. Mediums should only be present when adequate and experienced mortal controls are there also.

In the West of England there is an excellent example of a genuinely haunted house that has so far resisted all attempts to solve the origin of the haunt, the precise nature of the supernatural intelligence that directs the manifestation, or the motive of the phenomena.*

It is now extremely difficult to get permission to carry out investigations, as adequate precautions have been taken to safeguard both the phenomena and the incautious dabbler in matters beyond the veil.

I may take occasion here to warn my readers against the legal risks attached to stating that a house is haunted. In the eyes of the law such

* This particular ghost has been exorcised without effect. The house has been visited by psychic experts of considerable eminence, including H. Barson and others. The results of all these investigations were uniformly disastrous and disagreeable, and there is reason to believe that in some cases the health and mentality of less experienced investigators were adversely affected.

a statement is actionable, as it tends to depreciate the market value of the property. It is for this reason that stories concerning haunted houses when printed in newspapers have to be obscured in their indication of the precise locality and silent with regard to the name, number, or address of the suspected dwelling. The verbal repetition of such statements is also actionable and such cases as the bogus haunting of a house by the tenants or by caretakers in order to avoid payment of rent or the letting of the house are manifest reasons why the matter of haunted houses should always be treated with the utmost discretion.

Particulars concerning a reputed haunt can, however, be communicated to a newspaper with safety. All communications to a journal are privileged, and they can be trusted not to print anything which renders them party to an action for damages.

In 1913 a well-known student of occult matters announced his theory of *Protective Vibrations.** It was in effect an analysis of the actual

* Capt. Hugh Pollard was the author of this theory. His monograph was never printed, but typescripts of his sensational lecture before the members of the now defunct Odic Club

physical methods reported to be employed by spirit forces in building up their visible and material forms. His theory contained several assumptions which it is impossible to disregard and which certainly do not admit of rejection.

Taken in series he stated that "The presence of human beings was an essential to the appearance of the ghost." This admits of no disproof, as unless human witnesses are present there can be no testimony to the presence of the manifestation. A general consensus of opinion discredits ghost photographs unless taken under the strictest test conditions which again implies the presence of the human element.

"The energy or thought-matter" (i.e. psychoplasm) "extended by the mortals is the matter out of which the astral form is constructed. They are, so to speak, the prime motors or the energy and material, providing units out of which the discarnate intelligence builds its carnate habit."

This conception embraces psychoplasm and

were circulated to certain interested parties. He tells me that he had previously spent an interesting night at a haunted house. He was in the company of Mr. Eliott O'Donell and obtained a puzzling and unsatisfactory flashlight photograph of the manifestation that occurred on that occasion.

ectoplasm as one, but the researches of Schrenck-Notzing were not then known. These and other similar experiments all point to the essential probability that the broad sense of his reasoning is correct.

From this point onward he traces the development of the material astral body as a process of the conversion of the original vibrations into low forms of actual energy which are able to manipulate the atoms of matter and under the directing will of the intelligence or entity build up the materialization.

He makes one notable reservation, asserting that "there is no evidence to prove that discarnate intelligence is the directing force. Pure auto-suggestion, due to concentrated belief and anticipation that a specified ghost will appear, may achieve the same result."

But the purpose of his paper was not to argue concerning the reality of spirits, but to put forward an ingenious scientific theory concerning their mechanism. The sum-total of his theory is that the physical structure of the hallucination-spirit or ghost-form in its early stages of concentration is destructible by many forms of

etheric vibration of greater force or different wave-length.

Ghosts and spirits are integrally bound up with the conditions of darkness and dusk. The rays of solar light are admittedly inimical to all these manifestations. In other words, materialization cannot be performed under certain conditions of light which means certain conditions of vibration. The light rays which are visible to the human eye represent about one-tenth of the complete range of light rays known to exist from ultra-violet to infra-red.* At other points in the scale of ether waves come the vibrations associated with sound, with electricity and magnetic phenomena and with radio-activity.

The complexity of these wave-lengths of vibration is enormous, for within the range of light-rays there are rays of another kind of light, so that the sum-total of two kinds of light is, paradoxically enough, darkness.†

* A complete scale of all known ether waves, including the visible spectrum, has been drawn by Professor Lebedeff and is given on page 383 of the English edition of Kolbe's *Electricity*.

† This is a little-known fact, but nevertheless a commonplace of physics demonstrable in any lecture room.

Passing, logically enough, from stage to stage the "Theory of Protective Vibrations" points out that assuming the existence of ghosts or malevolent spirits, these cannot take material shape when opposed by hostile vibrations. Certain kinds of light, sound (such as the sonorous vibrations of church bells or gongs of special note), and high-frequency electric currents all destroy the initial stages of manifestation by purely mechanical means. Lastly he postulates that "in the presence of a radium salt (of specified intensity) . . . a ghost cannot manifest."

Protection or exorcism by radium salts is undeniably a twentieth-century possibility, for the terrific and incessant discharge of ether waves consequent upon the disintegration of the radium atoms is so powerful that even such a known and powerful force as electric energy is completely destroyed by it.

In the presence of a radium salt non-conductors of electricity become conductors. Differences of potential cease to exist and electroscopes and Leyden jars fail to retain their charges.

Under these conditions, then, it was hardly

conceivable that a manifestation which depends, in its initial stages, upon the most delicate of vibrations—the unknown vibrations of the psychoplasm could take place.

Truth is dependent upon experiment, upon patient repetition and trial and error. In order to test the theory in actual practice, I determined to pay a visit to the well-known and malignant ghost at X—— * and actually put to the test whether or not a ghost can manifest in the presence of a radium salt.

The rays of radioactive salts are unable to pass through lead, and pure radium bromide, which is the nearest that we have got to the isolation of the element radium, always has to be kept in a leaden box or cell, as otherwise its rays would pass through and destroy the skin and flesh of the man carrying it. Before the properties of radium were known, this destructive faculty of radium vibrations caused several mishaps, for unwary men of science carried these dangerous salts loose in glass vials in their pockets.

* The actual locality of X—— will be clear to many investigators.

For the purposes of experiment I obtained the loan of a small supply of a solution of a radium salt that gives out powerful emanations. This was enclosed in a glass vial which was in turn encased in a leaden box.

The haunted house is a peculiar old building of no particular architectural beauty. It stands remote and deserted in its own overgrown extended grounds, and over it breathes a generally depressing atmosphere of damp, neglect, oppression, and decay.

Viewed from the outside the house presents no outstanding features that attract the eye. The lower windows are heavily barred by rusted iron rails without and closed wooden shutters within. Even creepers seem to have felt the blight that lies upon the mansion, for no patch of green or rambling ivy tendril covers the bare surface of the brick.

Three storeys high, mansard-roofed and turreted with a dozen contorted Tudor chimney-stacks, the roof-line stands out against the sky and the dull leaf masses of the surrounding trees. The higher windows are also shuttered, but not even the small boys of the neighbouring

village have dared to break the grimy window frames that lie over the shutters. Desolate and forbidding, the mansion and its grounds lie derelict, shunned by all men.

My key is that of the small back door, and it is used but once or twice a year when the needs of the psychic call upon us to tread a path of peril and hazard.

Inside one steps into the cold stone-flagged passages that lead to the empty kitchens and offices. The air is heavy and dank with that queer smell of earth that one associates with crypts and graves rather than with the clean new-turned furrow. The whole house is bare of furniture, the paint of the woodwork dull and dirty. Spots of amorphous fungus cling to the walls, and here and there wallpaper has peeled off in long leprous strips, exposing the corpse-grey plaster behind.

The door from the servants' offices opens into the wide Georgian hall, from which sweeps up a monstrous wooden staircase. Half-way up the stair is a landing which marks the limit of activity of the manifestation. In the rooms beyond that and on the landing itself the presence

is terribly powerful, but it seems that beyond that limit the terror cannot go.

The actual room where the presence is at its strongest is a chamber at the end of the first floor. The room walls are outside walls on three sides, the remaining partition wall is the one in which is the door to the main corridor that runs through the house. In the centre of the floor is a deep cavity. This has been a priest's hiding hole or secret treasure closet, and from signs in the woodwork it is manifest that the trapdoor was once concealed beneath a big four-poster bed.

The windows are barred with high shutters that let in no light. The rays of my electric lantern disclose the mats of cobwebs that hang from the rusted cross bars, and it is evident that no human hand has disturbed the shutters for years. A trial shows me that some of the bolts are indeed rusted home with age-old neglect.

I unpacked my handbag, in which I carry the few simple necessities I need on these occasions, and wrapping myself up in my travelling rug composed myself to read by the light of my

travelling candles until the hour of ten was reached.

At ten o'clock I closed my book, put out my candle, and composed myself to watch for the manifestation, which I *knew* by inner consciousness would be forthcoming.

It was a dark and moonless night and not a flicker or ray of external light penetrated the dark stretches of the haunted room. No wind stirred the trees or moaned in the chimney-tops and the qualities of absolute dark and absolute quiet were all that could be desired.

Slowly out of the darkness seemed to come pinpoints of bluish light—mere specks of phosphorescence scintillant in the still air. The specks thickened and multiplied till they floated like a maze of dancing midgets; then too came the dark power of oppression, that sense of the dread and the uncanny that seems to grip the very heart and the base of the skull in a numbing grip of fear.

Cold grew the room, colder and colder—that sense of freezing that experienced psychics associate with the dread phenomena of malevolent

apparitions. It is a coldness of the soul as well as of the body, a dull biting cold that suggests the limitless freezing eternities of interstellar space.

The blue specks spun their dance and slowly became more luminous. They collected in little nebulæ of light like cigarette ends of intense blue radiance. Every particle of the air was filled with this luminosity, so that the room seemed to be filled with a dull moonlight.

Slowly the nebulæ changed from their spinning movement to a slow weaving motion. Strands and floating webs of phosphorescence drifted like smoke wreaths about the room.

The points of light gave place to clouds of luminous mist like softly rolling, utterly silent globes of dull blue light. Little by little the dance of the globes speeded up. They spun and whirled and wove in and out among themselves till they had drawn into one mass all the luminous matter in the room.

Like a terror-charged cloud this mass hovered some eight feet high, a clear two feet off the

floor; its brilliance waxed and waned and its confines drew in. Slowly the cloud was taking shape as a pillar and within the pillar one could see the ghastly shaping of the rudimentary form.

Here before my eyes was the actual form of the stranger—for this ghost is a malevolent strangling demon—on the very point of concentration.

Carefully I stretched out my hand to the leaden box, unscrewed the cylindrical lid, and threw into my right hand the precious vial of radium salt.

The energy-charged tube glowed in the dark with all the beauty of intense phosphorescence, and as I held it at arm's length toward the pillar of semi-materialization that represented all the evil forces of discarnate Hate—*the mists of vapour rolled away. As if by magic the whole apparition was dissipated,* and in twenty seconds was as if it had never been.

There is little more to be said. The theory had been brilliantly vindicated in practice, but it is impossible to generalize from one particular

instance. Physicists know the wide range of differences that exist between the different radium salts,* and there the matter must rest until opportunity for further experiments is available.

The analogous protective vibrations that the author of the monograph alleges would work are all probable, but require considerably more apparatus. To my mind the use of radioactive salts as talismans with which to exorcise a case of malignant haunting is at once a great and practical step in the direction of relieving humanity of these troublesome psychic intruders. The discovery and the theory are one of the most remarkable contributions to psychic science in our time.

Pitchblende, from which radium is extracted, does not appear to have attracted the attention of the ancients and there is no trace of its use in any process of alchemy or the allied sciences. Dr. Dee's magic mirror is reported to have been of a black substance and it is possible that it may have been of radioactive material, although

* The solution used was a solution of radium emanations which gives out α, τ, and γ rays together. It is not well known which ray affects the dissolution of psychoplasm.

this quality is not necessary for the purposes for which he required it.*

It is after all only a few years since the theory of ether-waves and vibrations was formulated. Research into psychic phenomena gives us a chain of disconnected phenomena which nevertheless are obviously connected. The distance from telepathy or thought-transference to exteriorized energy or power-transference is but a short one. Science will soon enable us to understand the mechanism of phenomena, and when we once know the true rules or laws governing these phenomena we shall be able to establish spirit communication at will.

* The mirror of Dr. Dee is still in existence, but the material the mirror is made of is a surface of polished coal.

CHAPTER V

SEX IN THE NEXT WORLD

THERE is in existence an enormous mass of recorded spirit communication concerning life and death. The one outstanding feature concerning these revelations is that they tell us extremely little. Sometimes the reason given for this withholding of information is that it is forbidden by higher spirits, and it is certainly remarkable that despite the great enthusiasm shown for the principles of democracy in this world, there have never been any revelations of a democratic principle on the higher plane.

The rule of the next world appears to be that of a benevolent autocracy, working through a hierarchy of directing spirits controlling other spirits on clearly defined planes. We know nothing of the political system of the other world except that there is no such thing as any form of elective system, no majority rule, and little social structure.

The great dominant factor of the hereafter as described by the bulk of Spiritualistic literature appears to be the acceptance of *authority*. The recently arrived spirit is taken in hand by "guides" who instruct, and the spirit then passes from grade to grade or plane to plane, until it achieves an eminence entirely beyond the bounds of human thought.

There is perhaps no limit to the speculation that can be indulged in concerning the after-life, but there are certain aspects of it that appear contradictory. There are good spirits and bad spirits, low grades and high grades and all intermediate stages. There are also low spirits that are said never to have been human and high spirits of the same non-mortal nature. But badness and goodness exist on the spiritual planes as much as on this earth.

The spirits who visit séances retain many of their earthly characteristics. They state that they are still male and female despite the assumption on the part of many writers that sex does not exist upon the spiritual plane. The least possible experience of spirit communica-

tion in any form is quite sufficient to expose this amazing fallacy.

If the differentiation of sex has any purpose at all, it can only have the same purpose in the next world as it has in this. Otherwise sex distinction would be cast off just as is the human body after death.

This brings us to the consideration of how and why the myth of the sexlessness of spirits has passed into acceptance as a fact.

The Spiritualist is open to human error and it is only human to build into our theories those things which tend to prove them and to disregard matters which are not in harmony with our ideas. Both in Britain and in America there is a certain amount of false modesty that amounts to pruriency concerning all matters of sex.

As a result, the very limited moral doctrines of sexual relationship as understood by certain Christian sects, have been tacitly held to by those dominating the after-life. Sex, as understood in conventional terms, has been seen to be such a danger to the construction of a hypothetical but perfectly moral future state, that

the whole sex question has been squashed by a statement by Spiritualists that sex does not exist in after-life.

This is entirely wrong, for, as I have pointed out above, according to spirit statement sex does exist and it is only fair to suppose that it is there for the usual reason.

There exists the further problem of the origin of spirits that have never been mortal. These must come somehow from somewhere, and there is no reason to suppose that the continuation of sex upon the astral planes is not for this purpose. Its existence is indeed an absolute answer to the theories of parthenogenesis held by believers whose minds were clouded with a residuum of theological beliefs.

To sum up, we have evidence of the continuation of sex—indeed it is a cardinal point, for it is impossible to believe in continuation of personality after death unless sex continues with it. One cannot logically believe in the one without the other.

The state of error has arisen through the confusion of sex with sin. The would-be formulators of the new Spiritualistic dogmas, having

been unable to effect a mental compromise between the moral and monogamous Christian and the moral and polygamous Mohammedan, attempted to solve the whole business by a bland statement that there was no sex in the other world.

Some writers do indeed recognize this permanence of sex, but gloss it over.* They ignore the fact that if a thing exists it exists for a purpose and the fatal conception that the gratification of a sex desire is a sin persists throughout their pages.

On the other hand, gratification of other voluptuous sense desires such as aural pleasures from music or self-abandonment to any of the pleasures of the intellect, appears to be regarded not only as permissible but as praiseworthy. In fact, any analysis of the reported habits and customs of the next world, plunges us into a mass of paradoxical contradictions.

In point of fact it is impossible to draw a hard-and-fast line between the actual spirit

* "People live in communities as one would expect if like attracts like, and the male spirit still finds his true mate though there is no sensuality in the grosser sense and no childbirth." Sir A. Conan Doyle, Chapter III, *The New Revelation.*

revelation and interpolated ideas by the medium. It is also notorious that as soon as any new concept of the next world is published in book form, the "revelations" from any different sources seem to take on an unmistakable tinge according to the latest theories. In fact, a literary psychoanalysis of reported next worlds shows the unmistakable traces of books read in the past.

Certain accounts of the spirit life obtained through Mohammedan mediums by French investigators in Algiers show what may be called a peculiarly active sexual life in the after-world. This may possibly be attributed to either early religious belief in a sensuous Mohammedan paradise or alternatively to the particular type of Arab spirits who furnished the description. In any case, the accounts could not be published for general or even private reading, but there is no conceivable reason why they should be deemed more unreliable than other spirit communications.

Some idea of the theme of these revelations can be gathered if I may say that one of the communicators, called Sidi Aissa Ben S'dub,

prefaces his words by the cryptic statement: "Know then, O mortals, that here are neither camels nor horses—nor virtuous women,—for us virtue, as ye know it, exists not. And, as I have related, there being neither camels nor horses nor virtuous women, what think ye then occupies the time of us who were strong men?"

Oriental imagery is rich in terms concerning sex, and the revelation as taken down in Arabic is a document of some literary value. Its translation into precise French leaves us under no misapprehension as to the actual technique of sex gratification on the next plane. Their methods appear to be our methods, but it is of course impossible to arrive at any conception of relative degrees of pleasure. It is also curious to note that in the Arab revelations given there was no reference at all to any ensuing spirit birth, but one interpretation of and obscure text might lead one to suppose that the offspring of these unions were "djinni," i.e. non-mortal and soulless spirits.

Cases of intercourse between djinns and mortals are the basis of many Moslem tales and legends in which the sex interest is paramount.

But it must be borne in mind that the Mohammedan idea of the invisible world is so different from that prescribed either by Eastern or Western thought that it is almost impossible to co-ordinate it with any of our accepted theories.

On the other hand, no Spiritualist revelation or theory is of value unless it fits all lands and all creeds. Thus, when the number of spirit visitants of African, Red Indian, or other origin, is taken into account, it is manifest that no *abstract theory of morality which is not in accordance with the known physical facts concerning the spirit world, is likely to be practised there.*

As time goes on, it will become increasingly impossible for the practising Spiritualist to ignore the enormous fact of sex. At present various beliefs are held. These range from the pure sexlessness theory, which is manifestly untenable to variations like a "perfectly pure and spiritual sex relationship in no way physical," or some such platitude.

This kind of expression is pure mental flatulence, for it is clear that in the spirit world there

is nothing *physical* as we know it, and that everything there is *psychical*—again as we know it.

The conception of the spirit world that is most widely held does away with all idea of penal restrictions. Hell, purgatory, and the theological varieties of damnation are contrary to the whole conception. Once again we are dependent on spirit teaching for our visualization of life in the hereafter, and having established the existence of sex, which would not exist unless it implied the permanence of sexual attraction and sex gratification, we not unreasonably desire to know what, if any, are the sex limits in the next life.

The realm of speculation thus opened up is enormous. It is possibly the vision of a voluptuous sensualist heaven. It is possibly the vision of a new theory of hell in which spirits are unable to obtain the gratification of those desires which they are equipped to experience.

There is no particular reason to suppose that the married state continues—indeed, there is evidence to the reverse. Altogether the problems raised are far too great for the little evi-

dence we have yet obtained from the spirit world to lead us to a true solution.

As ever we come back to the point of: How much is real spirit communication? How much is simply well-meaning but inaccurate Spiritualist interpretation of interpolation?

The answer of the Spiritualist to such a question is usually the affirmation that "desire does not exist in the spirit world."

This may be good enough to hoodwink the amateur or the shallow thinker, but it must be remembered that the whole of what we must admit is the dark side of Spiritualism, the bad or lying spirits, the demons of possession and the demons of obsession, all these are active affirmations of the reality of desire persisting.

It is not enough for us to affirm that the dark elements are either non-existent or simply the effects of our subconscious minds. If these rules apply to the dark side they must apply to the light side, too. If this were the case the whole fabric of Spiritualism crumbles to the ground. If we accept any spirit evidence we must accept *all* spirit evidence, and we have no right to reject as unsound statements that

do not fall in with the theories which we have accepted on the strength of similar statements.

The continuation of sexual activity on the psychic planes may be a staggering conception to some people, but a little thought will show that it is not half such a shattering idea as the perfectly unjustifiable hypothesis that there is none.

The existence of sex in the spirit world leads us to the supposition that there are there some organized forces of law and order, otherwise this conception of the next world would seem to be a field where a highly intellectual, intelligent, and powerful individual soul might enjoy a limitless orgy of psychic rape.

There is no reason to think that such a thing is impossible, for cases of demoniac or spirit possession are in effect cases of psychic rape of a mortal and often present instances of the most amazing sexual aberration owing to the terrible desires of the uninvited tenant of the mind.

The believing Spiritualist has built on slender grounds a wonderful conception of the

spirit world, but it is a one-sided structure, and it is important to note that the "Everything in the garden is lovely!" idea of the next world is not by any means borne out by the revelations of its inhabitants. One can indeed ask oneself what ground is there for optimism?

What reasons other than self-deception, self-assurance, and self-flattery are there for sweeping away the idea of terror, punishment, and the inexorable law of Abstract Justice that has for ages been held to be implicit in the life hereafter?

The sceptic is indeed justified when, after reading reams of well-meant pseudo-religious twaddle, he asks the supporters of the new revelation: "And *why* should it all be *couleur de rose?*"

Faith may do many things, but Faith cannot make black white—even in the realm of the spirit.

There is good reason to suppose that in the past many revelations concerning sex-life in the spirit plane have been suppressed or destroyed. The well-meaning Spiritualist with mediumistic gifts or the capacity for automatic writing

does not always get the precise kind of spirit teaching expected. On the other hand, there is a wide difference between the meaningless obscenities that are sometimes sent and various coherent statements that can be classed as definite revelations. The private operator, knowing little of the matters with which he or she is dealing, is frequently ashamed to let these strange, frank manuscripts or records be seen by others. Often they are shown to a wrong person, classed as evil spirit writings, and the great question that animates the spirit world: "Should mortals be told?" again goes on.

At a séance held in Paris some interesting statements concerning the psychic world were vouchsafed by a spirit calling itself Zaza Guilbert. There were five of us at the table and two of the party were practised automatists.

First came some personal particulars of the spirit. She was born near Grenoble, in Dauphine, in 1826, but was in Paris when Napoleon the Third was proclaimed Emperor (1852) and was employed with theatrical dressmaking. She married and left two girl children.

It was the question: "Is life in the spirit

world as gay and gallant * as it was in those days in this sphere?" that set the ball rolling.

A. That depends on how you look at things. We are men and women over here in so far as that goes.

Q. Is life on the spirit plane sexless?

A. Certainly not! (Emphasis conveyed by violent knocking of the table.)

Q. (By one of the ladies of the party.) Is there childbirth in the spirit world?

A. Not in the same way as on earth. (No answer was returned to some further inquiries on this subject.)

Q. Is there separation of the sexes?

A. No; it would be intolerable.

Q. Is morality of earth binding on the spirit plane?

A. No; that would be still more intolerable.

Q. Have you a husband there?

A. No; several affinities.

Q. Intellectual affinities only?

A. By no means.

* The word "gallant" carries rather different implications in French than are covered by the literal English rendering of "gallant."

Q. Can you compare the relationship to any earthly parallel?

A. Yes. Living *une vie de demi-mondaine sans reproche.*

Q. Do all spirits enjoy life in this manner?

A. It is not obligatory.

Q. (By one of the ladies.) Are there scandals in the spirit world?

A. Sometimes.

Q. Are they due to moral censure of higher spirits?

A. No; jealousy, because higher spirits mix themselves up in it.

Q. Can you describe one of these scandals?

A. Not through the table. Write.

Q. You will give it as automatic writing?

A. Yes.

One of the automatists left the circle to fetch pencil and paper. Then we resumed. The power appeared to be instantly forthcoming, and the writing stated that:

"Benedetta Chiesole was the mistress of Théodule Affra and several other spirits on our plane.

"This intimacy became obnoxious to a spirit

called du Paits Herbault, who was a monk of Montpellier in the sixteenth century. He was not on our plane but higher up, but was permitted to come down to us for certain purposes. Being on a higher plane, there was no way of keeping him out when he was not wanted, for he had the power of passing through all psychomaterial substances that serve us as material substances serve you.

"His persecution of Benedetta was remarkable, for he was astonishingly enamoured of her. At length matters got to such a pitch that the others protested through the guides. But they got cold comfort. They were told not to interfere with the higher spirits or it would be the worse for them, and Benedetta was told that it was natural for her to have to expiate her earthly shortcomings in this manner."

The results of other sittings at which other spirits have made communications are in some cases quite as detailed and a great deal more startling than the above. In addition, a great mass of what may be definitely termed abnormal sex literature has come from the pens of people practising automatic writing—and it is an in-

dubitable fact that some of these writings have been written under control by people of irreproachable life and character.

The common-sense explanation is that these writings and communications have nothing whatever to do with spirits and that these are, so to speak, a seething up of illegal desires and ideas which have been repressed by the conscious mind into the censorship of the subliminal self. This theory is only tenable if the whole basic doctrine that these things are communicated by spirits is given up.

If, on the other hand, we hold that there is anything at all in Spiritualism we are faced with the inevitable conclusion that, however much we may desire to get rid of it, sex is as troublesome in the next world as in this.*

* The notes and papers concerning the physiological side of sex in the next world that have been collected are not suitable for general reading. Experienced Spiritualists will have no difficulty in surmising the general character of these records

CHAPTER VI

THE REALITY OF SORCERY

I HAVE often been asked by folk who were perfectly serious in their inquiry if there "was anything in" latter-day sorcery, and whether the practice actually existed outside the realm of fiction. It is a difficult question to answer, for the average man mixes up witchcraft, sorcery and necromancy, and one cannot be certain whether he is alluding to the dark ceremony of the Black Sabbath, to the use of occult knowledge for malevolent purposes, or whether he is thinking of wax images and pine, incantations and night rides astride a broomstick.

Put in a simpler form, the question comes to this: Can experienced occultists utilize spirit or unknown natural forces for malevolent uses? The answer is an unhesitating affirmative. Under certain conditions, it can be done.

Magic has always been divided into white or

good magic, and black or bad magic. Both have been liberally endowed with ritual observance, but shorn of non-essentials the determining factor that decides whether magic is black or white is the secret intent of the operating magician.

In the past the great popular attribute of the magician was his knowledge of healing. He was not only a seer of the future and a finder of lost things, but also a healer. On the reverse side may be set against his capacity for healing his power for casting spells or doing harm; against his draughts of beneficent medicine, his vials of poison.

The doctor who uses hypnotic treatment, practises suggestion or act as a psychotherapeutist, is to-day the direct twentieth-century descendant of the magicians of the past. Apollonius of Tyana is his patron; Merlin worked his wonders by the same rules.

It is to the modern studies in psychic science that we must turn to find the underlying mechanisms of magic practices, for a full three-quarters of art magic is due to the little-known effects of hypnotism or suggestion, and but a shadowy

balance to the powers of discarnate intelligences of evil.

The discoveries of the existence of "animal magnetism" by Mesmer was the first step which brought the psychic phenomena of will domination out of the realm of the occult into the domain of medical knowledge. For a century Mesmer's theory has been discredited, but to-day modern students of psychic science are beginning to pay attention to it again.

It fell into discredit owing to the discoveries of Braid, the Manchester physician, who discovered that Mesmer's phenomena could be produced independently of the theory of "animal magnetism" by plain hypnosis.

Braid's theories were followed out by Chercot and the Paris School of Hypnotists, and their theories were in turn demolished by Liébault and Bernheim of the Nancy School, who held that all the phenomena of hypnotism in their turn were produced by suggestion.

In point of actual fact, advanced thinkers of to-day hold that the same effect may be produced by all three methods of practice. In the same way we may produce a given electrical

phenomenon such as the lighting of an incandescent lamp by the action of chemical solutions on metals in a battery, or by the rotation of a coil of wire between magnetic poles in a dynamo. The methods are different, but the forces evolved and the effect obtained are identical.

The lay mind will follow my argument better if I use the loose terms of hypnotism and hypnosis than if I attempt a more scientific terminology.

The first point that must be grasped is that the sorcerer or wizard possesses psychic gifts or qualities of an entirely different order to those claimed by Spiritualists.

The sorcerer is a hypnotist—that is to say, he is an individual who possesses the power of emitting or radiating an unknown psychic force.

Most people are neutral, they neither radiate this force nor do they oppose or resist its passage, but the individuals who are susceptible to its action seem to possess the faculty of arresting this radiation and converting it to mental energy within themselves. These are

the people who are what is known as good hypnotic subjects.

In the histories of the great sorcerers of the past the *assistant,* that is to say the subject, plays as important a rôle as does the mage himself, for the subject is the instrument of the master.

The average person who possesses mediumistic or psychic qualities in the Spiritualistic sense, is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred in a greater or lesser degree a sensitive hypnotic subject.

The odd few who do not come in the above category may be classed as hermaphroditic or doubly gifted individuals who possess both radating power and subjectivity. One or two noted materializing mediums of the past have been thus endowed.

In the usual circle there is the medium and the sitters. Some of these may be neutral, but in an average circle there are one or more who possess unknown to themseles a certain amount of radiant force. It is this which passes along the chain of hands to the medium where it is arrested and condensed to play its mysterious

part in the liberation of psychic elements that can be utilized by the unseen spirit workers.

If there is present in the circle an individual who is greatly endowed with this force—and whose mental desires approximate to black rather than white magic, we have an instance of those dread dangers that beset those who unwittingly pass beyond the threshold of the known.

The trance state of the medium is akin to light hypnosis and the subject or medium of a well-meaning little circle of Spiritualists may, unknown to him or herself, become the slave of one or other of the members of the circle.

It is an asseveration with hypnotists that they have no power without the *consent* of the individual. But once they have won the entry of the mind that entry is theirs for ever, and even the bodily presence of the operator is not required to achieve this domination of the mind of the subject.*

The common instances where this kind of thing occurs cannot be classed as true sorcery,

* Chapter X of Professor Boirac's *Psychic Science* "Experimental Researches in Sleep Provoked at a Distance."

for in most cases the operator is unconscious of how or why the fulfilment of his desires comes about. The true sorcery only comes in when an individual possessing the required psychic faculty, and in addition, occult knowledge, exerts these of set purpose in order to gratify his desires.

Vengeance of an enemy, the subjugation of another's will, the satisfaction of a sex passion, all these are motives for sorcery. The witch-doctor of West Africa, the voodoo priestesses of Cuba and Hayti practise these accomplishments no less than their white brethren in black magic. Sorcery lives to-day no less than it lived centuries ago. There are several roads to its portals—but not a track leading back to the regions of light for those that pass its gates.

The first aim of the sorcerer is to get the victim in a state of suggestibility. This can be accomplished in a dozen different ways well known to the practised student.

In the first, fumes of a special sort of incense played no inconsiderable part in the rôle of sorcery. According to ritual they are to pro-

pitiate the spirits—in actual practice they induce relaxation on the part of the subject and assist in building up that necessary atmosphere which is essential to suggestibility.

The effect of darkness, of points of light gleaming amid surrounding dark, the magic mirror or the crystal globe; all these were more than stage properties—they are the mechanical implements of suggestion.

Let us suppose that some weak and curious woman visits a sorcerer to obtain his help in some affair of heart. The man of mystery seats her in a comfortable chair; the lights are lowered and he tells her to gaze at the crystal ball upon the table before her.

Fumes of incense hang in the heavy air. The man's voice is clear, dominant, and sonorous; slowly it becomes soothingly monotonous.

Gradually the client feels languor stealing over her. The crystal becomes cloudy and in the globe appears something that she knows and recognizes.

Probably the crystal tells her nothing that means anything to her. Certainly she has seen in it nothing but what she has known at some

time before,* or something that the magician has seen before. But the net result is that she is convinced of the occult powers possessed by him.

This is the prelude to other visits and little by little her will yields to that of the sorcerer and the suggestions that he has implanted in her subconscious mind begin to take effect. If he is a daring scoundrel, his domination may take any form. Unconscious that she is not acting of her own free will, she may yet be brought to place at his disposal everything and anything that he may require of her.

He has invoked no spirit aids, but has caused the powers of hypnotism and suggestion, taking advantage of the light condition of hypnosis induced by the crystal-gazing. Police and press persecutions of the Seers of Bond Street are not altogether unjustified in many cases. The real facts may not be brought out at the court, owing to the shame that publicity would inflict upon the dupes, but the prosecution is, in nine cases out of ten, justifiable.

* See Proceedings of La Société Universelle d'Etudes Psychiques and *Proceedings S.P.R.*, V and VIII.

The class of petty criminals above mentioned are again not true sorcerers, in that they only use occult natural forces, summoning to their aid no spirit attributes. In the lowest grade of the sorcerers we find the necromancers.

There are still a few of these in Paris and latterly there was one in the West Country. It depends on the individual operator how much of his ceremonial is for the purpose of inducing suggestibility or partial hypnosis and how much is for the direct evocation of evil spirits. Very often the necromancer himself is deluded enough to confuse natural with supernatural power.

There is a certain class of spirits to whom the ancients gave the name of Lemures. These can be semi-materialized, made visible, and bound to service by a comparatively simple ritual, for in place of needing the material vehicle of ectoplasm, extended by a materializing medium, they can take shape from the emanations of warm blood.

This vital fluid plays an important part in all magical ceremony. We find mention of it from the days when Ulysses poured blood and wine into a trench to call up the spirits before he

went down into hell. In the dark history of Gilles de Retz * the blood ritual is seen in all its ghostliest fluorescence. The calabash of blood of the "white goat" is essential in obi and voodoo magic, and blood, fresh blood, not necessarily but preferably human, is used by the necromancer of to-day.

Those learned in occult matters will readily perceive the precious function that blood emanations exercise, but on the contrary, the man of science and the psychologist will not be able to understand the part that blood plays in this peculiar alchemy.

It must be clearly understood that experiment of this nature is extraordinarily perilous and that any attempt at necromancy by students whose knowledge is insufficient can have none but disastrous results.†

The elemental forces evoked by this ceremony may be compared to gunpowder. Any fool can blow himself up with powder by setting a match to it, but it takes a skilled artillerist to harness

* See "Gilles de Rais, dit Barbe Bleu." Bonsard et Maulde, *History of Magic*, Chapter VI: "Eliphas Levi." In fiction, Huysman's *La-Bas*.

† For obvious reasons I have suppressed the detail of ritual.

the forces and make them propel a projectile to a given target. Experiment with elemental forces is analogous and the greater part of the ritual deals with the protection of the operator or sorcerer himself from those dread spirits who obey his summons.

In 1912 I attended the course of lectures on psychic science given at a sub-school of the University of Jena. A fellow-student there gave me a letter of introduction to Gottlieb Bentlemeyer, a professor of law at one of the Hanover Hochschulen and an ardent student of black magic.

At that time he had rooms in the Wiesenstrasse and had in his charge one or two private pupils whom he was cramming for their necessary examinations. One of these lads, a youngster from Stettin, in North Prussia, was his assistant in the necromantic art, and was a most highly gifted sensitive or hypnotic subject.

It was not until we had had several ordinary séances and he had shown me some astounding experiments in the externalization of sensibility and clairvoyance under hypnosis that I deemed it fit to mention the subject of necromancy.

We were at that time in the Hanover Museum and had been examining an exhibit of "Qual-apparat"—racks, winches, and torturing-irons of various descriptions. It was our discussion of the possible sending of the spirit of his assistant, Walther Kraus, under hypnosis to psychometrize these vile memorials of a brutal past that raised the subject. We came to the conclusion that the experiment would be extremely hazardous, but Bentlemeyer kindly offered to attempt to call up the spirit of one or more of the men who had used these things.

"It will not be an easy task to find them," he said, "but being men of blood it may be possible to find them by means of the blood elementals."

It took us three days to make our preparations, for although Bentlemeyer had an excellent and systematically arranged cabinet of magical requisites, one or two things had to be procured.

His association with the Hochschule enabled him to obtain fresh blood through the agency of one of his medical colleagues.

We rehearsed the ritual carefully, in order

that there should be no fault, and I must confess that I prepared myself for the ordeal with considerable trepidation. His ceremonial of evocation was slightly at variance with accepted French practice, but the discrepancies were not material and appeared to have crept in during the time of King Frederick Wilhelm of Prussia. Bentlemeyer informed me that the original MS. in German and Hebrew had been in the possession of the celebrated Steinert.*

It was a clear autumn night with a perfect moon; the air had a touch of frost in it and the great town of Hanover was quiet and still.

Bentlemeyer was already in his robes when one of the pupils admitted me. I changed into the necessary garments, took the rod and girdle which he had lent me, and placed the snake-hilted poniard in its belt sheath.

The circle of evocation had been marked out in chalk on the floor. The prepared candles burnt in the angles of the pentacle and the saucers of salt and the elements were in their appropriate places. The sorcerer stood within

* Steinert was the chief adept in the Society of the Illuminati. See *Essai sur la Secte des Illuminés*, Marquis de Lachet.

his circle of protection facing the small tripod brazier in which was a brazen plate glowing over the frame of a small spirit lamp.

I took my place within the *enceinte* of a similar diagram, and on a couch, lying between us, was Walther, the assistant. The candle lights burnt in the draughtless atmosphere, the dull yellowish flames standing up without a flicker, sending their faint tail of black smoke toward the ceiling. Beyond the confines of our protective circles was a grotesque bronze bowl or shallow basin. Bentlemeyer removed the black velvet hood that covered it and the filmy crimson surface of fresh blood gleamed in the light.

At a sign we began the chanting of the preliminary invocations to the guardians of the gates. The room was sonorous with the great Hebrew names, and from time to time a fresh pinch of incense on the brazier would send a wreath of pungent fume across the room.

The boy on the couch breathed heavily, loosened the restriction of his garments, and soon subsided into a definite state of trance.

From invocation we changed to the ritual of evocation. And before the echoes of the first

summons had died down, a cold wind seemed to burst out in the very heart of the room itself, making the candles flicker and the shadows flit and dance in arabesques across the low ceiling.

I felt for the poniard at my belt and drawing it from its sheath held the naked blade ready.*

The second and third utterances of the words of power intensified the effect and the boy moaned pitifully.

Bentlemeyer signed to me with his rod to look toward the blood bowl.

The surface of the liquid was being slowly agitated, strong swirls and broken wave motions appeared on the surface, sluggish, iridescent bubbles floated for a while and burst, and at last the whole body of fluid within the bowl was in a state of violent agitation.

The sorcerer bent to a vessel on the ground and threw upon the brazier some new essence—not an incense. The smoke wreathed itself above the brazier, then seemed to take shape like a pillar and curve toward the blood bowl.

* Elementals cannot face pointed steel. Probably because the latter concentrates radiations of psychic force from the human body which are destructive to them.

Slowly yet distinctly the vapours clustered above the blood and slowly took semi-human shape. Incessantly they changed and melted—now limb-like, here betraying the outline of a demon face, there a pillared, smoothly working trunk.

From the bowl came a noise like cats' tongues lapping and now and then the bowl itself would tilt and move a fraction of an inch or so about the floor. For a moment we watched this monstrous manifestation in silence. Then the sorcerer resumed his ritual and bound the spirits present to do his bidding to the spell of the Three Known and One Unknown elements.

"What are your names?" he asked, and the elemental demons or spirits speaking through the trance-bound boy gave them.

"Who is your leader?" There was a momentary hesitation, and then a spirit answering to the name of Amalik assumed the leadership.

"Have you been a mortal?"

"No, I was never mortal. I was an earth-spirit, serving the priests of Odin till the Cross came."

"What brought you here to-night?"

"The Blood Libation and the summons. What do you want of us? We wish to depart."

"You are bound to do my bidding by the words of Might. You may not go. I want you to find for me the spirit of one of the men of blood who used the torture instruments in the Museum."

"I do not know the men."

"I command you to seek them. I command all of you by the powers that are mine to seek and bring them."

For a moment there was silence, broken only by the laboured breathing of the boy. Then he spoke again.

"I have found one, O Masters."

"What is his name?"

"Kurt Ettethurm."

"He is to answer my questions himself. Where did you live?"

A new and harsher voice issued from the boy's lips.

"By Sachsenhausen, near Augsburg."

"When?"

"In the time of Charles the Fifth of Spain."

"Were you one of his torturers?"

"No, I served Count Anton of Tornen."

"Who were your victims?"

"Criminals, bandits, and Lutherans."

"When did you die?"

"At Muhlberg."

"When—not where?"

"At Muhlberg—killed in the battle of Muhlberg."

"Where are you now?"

"Why ask? I am in a lower state."

"Do you revisit this sphere unless summoned?"

"I am always here, but you cannot see me."

"Where are you usually?"

"By the slaughter houses."

"Do you move from place to place?"

"Yes, I follow the Scharfrichter (headsman).*

"Why?"

"To watch."

"Are you bound to?"

"No, I like it."

* In Germany capital punishment is still carried out by the headsman, who beheads with a sword.

"Can you show yourself to us?"

"I do not think so. Help me and I will try."

"How can we help you?"

"Place that bowl of blood at the northern corner of the pentacle."

I must have started to move forward, for Bentlemeyer shouted at me to keep still, and I realized in a flash that I had nearly been trapped into going beyond the protection of my circle.

The boy began to chuckle horribly and then suddenly choked. Before our eyes his face became empurpled, his eyes seemed to start from his head, and the tongue protruded. His legs kicked and his hands beat feebly at something solid—impenetrable—but invisible, that poised in the empty air above him.

"Stop it, for God's sake!" I cried to Bentlemeyer.

My voice awoke him from the creeping paralysis of terror that was mastering him, and raising the scroll of the ritual he recovered himself by an effort of will, and uttered the words of the spell of release.

A swirl of icy cold wind seemed to sweep about us, and I stabbed at the invisible grasp that seemed to be plucking at my garments. Two of the candles went out and the windows rattled violently in their frames. Then with frightening suddenness the manifestations ceased.

The boy was gasping for breath once more and the terror had passed.

Not until the last of the valedictory phrases of the ritual had been said did either of us dare leave our stations. Then both of us, shocked and terrified by what we had seen, went over to the boy Walther.

He was deeply entranced yet, breathing heavily; the colour had not yet ebbed from his face and on his brow were beads and runnels of perspiration.

Bentlemeyer made a few passes, breathed on his eyelids, and brought him round. But there on his uncollared neck was the dark, bruised imprint of strangling fingers.

. . . . .

This experience was phenomenal. We examined the room carefully afterwards and came

to the conclusion that the couch on which Walther was lying projected at one corner over the circuit of the diagram that should have protected it. The identity of the spirit we could not determine. Whether it was really the spirit of the executioner or torturer, whether it was merely an impersonation by a demon elemental, or what particular denizen of the realm of evil it was that came to the summons and the blood bowl I cannot say.

I learnt later that Bentlemeyer was, despite his learning and his professional standing, a man of notoriously evil and depraved life. There is no doubt that our experiences that evening thoroughly startled him. A brother student of proven reliability told me later that Bentlemeyer had assured him that he could and did evoke evil spirits, and evoke them to execute malicious tricks upon his confrères in the professional world.

In this connection it is interesting to note that when looking through his cabinet of magical instruments I saw two small nude waxen models, male and female. I asked at the time the purpose of these and he explained that they

were used by him in a hypnotic experiment with Walther. This was the phenomenon known as externalization of sensibility.

Under hypnosis Walther's feeling of sensation could be transferred by the operator to any object, such as a glass of water or a waxen doll. A pin-prick on the surface of the water would be felt by him as an acute pricking sensation all over the body. When the doll was used, pain was felt by Walther in the precise place where the doll was pricked.*

The hypothesis is that the sorcerer and wizard of the Middle Ages made use of this phenomenon and that their victims were the unconscious victims of hypnosis. Before this hypothesis can be dismissed by the sceptic it should be remembered that sorcery flourished best in ages of faith and superstition. An active belief in the powers of sorcery or witchcraft facilitates not only direct suggestion, but also suggestion on self-hypnosis.

A point of interest is that the effects of sorcery or evil suggestion are capable of being

* Chapter II, *Psychical and Supernormal Phenomena*, by Dr. Paul Joire; Chapter XV, *Psychic Science*, by Emile Boriac, and numerous other works give details of this phenomenon.

remedied by people who understand the subject. Exorcism is valuable and is as real as sorcery, and it is by no means a lost art among those occultists who have studied the dark side of spirit phenomena in order to know all that we are allowed to know of this dangerous subject.

Above all things, the Spiritualist who has certain healing qualities in connection with mediumistic gifts should avoid any attempt at exorcism. Cases have been known when the attempt was successful, but only in so far that the evil was transferred from the original victim to the would-be healer. As a rule, the results are bad for both parties. The mental and consequently physical dangers of this kind of thing are far too serious to be lightly meddled with. One cannot insist on this too strongly.

CHAPTER VII

INCENSE AND OCCULTISM

The ancients possessed amazing secrets concerning psychic knowledge of all kinds. Apart from the philosophical tenets held by the various degrees of priestcraft there was a special secret knowledge of what may be called the mechanical side. They knew how to produce phenomena.

Then as now, the specially gifted were used in connection with the service of mysteries, but in all the old cults which attained to any degree of organization the arch-priests or hierophants were not themselves mediums, but made use of mediums as instruments. The rôle played by the medium was a more or less unimportant one just as to-day the "psychics" used by the different sects of Tibetan Lamas are relatively unimportant and insignificant members of the priestcraft.

The priests had, however, other secrets—se-

crets which on occasion conferred the gift of vision on the ordinary non-psychic person. Sacerdotalism and royalty were closely allied not only in ancient Egypt, but throughout the bulk of the mid-Oriental and Byzantine cults. Then as now, people demanded proof of miracles and the proof had to be forthcoming.

Little by little, savants have recovered from hieroglyph and papyri, from stone and manuscript, something of the great rituals and something of both the outer and inner forms of these dead faiths.

We know enough to realize that the adepts possessed the art of releasing the spirit from the body and of producing the trance state not only in individuals but in comparatively large congregations.

The two hypotheses are the agency of hypnotism and the agency of some mechanical or physiological factor such as a drug.

The possibilities of hypnotism in the form of crowd suggestion cannot be overlooked, but it does not entirely account for some of the phenomena that tradition has handed down and which is substituted by contemporary record.

Analysis of some of these cults shows that the initiates partook of a ceremonial drink or brew of some kind and that there is a more than mystical use of the censer. Nine-tenths of the so-called propitiatory ritual was symbolic, but there remains an unexplained tenth part whose agency was primarily that of mechanical excitant of what one may term "psychism"—those qualities of perception that we class as psychic gifts.

It is precisely these extraordinarily valuable secrets that were among the deepest arts of the priestcraft. There was no record of these—nothing direct is to be found in the writings, and although it is possible to recover the philosophic bases of the myths these rule-of-thumb mysteries still elude us.

After all, many other similar secrets, and even fairly well-known common facts of antiquity, have been lost to us. We do not know the composition of the celebrated Roman fish sauce "garum." We cannot tell what are the ingredients of Stradivarius' violin varnishes or some old master's colours. Nevertheless, it is unreasonable to suppose that the necessary ma-

terials have vanished from the earth. We have the whole known world to ransack for them where the ancients had only a limited and circumscribed number of plants, beasts, and minerals from which to gather their ingredients.

The function of some drugs is to produce mental effects, visions, hallucinations, dreams, and phantoms. The logical assumption is that the ancients knew certain rule-of-thumb methods of utilizing some forms of these drugs in such a way as to loosen the hold of the body (and the consciousness) upon the mind, and to produce an artificial state of clairvoyance.

The wizard of the Middle Ages was also a doctor, and it is claimed that the familiar that inhabited the sword of Paracelsus—which sword he always had by him and could never be parted from—was none other than a certain amount of opium concealed in the hollow pommel.*

The function of hypnotic drugs is known to a point. That is to say, we know what effect is produced on a normal individual by a given dose of an unknown drug, but in nine cases out

* *Paracelsus*, Fr. A. Rufini.

of ten we do not know precisely how this effect is brought about and have few clues to the series of physiological reactions that bring about the mental state.

The connection between a physical draught and a mental state is indicated throughout the history of magic. Ceremonial libations, ritual consumption of potions or "devil's brews" of one kind and another are part and parcel of the traditions of necromancy and sorcery.

The connection between these hypnotic draughts and the practice of poisoning was not clearly perceived by most writers of the past. Sorcery and poisoning were indeed twin practices of the Middle Ages, for where the spell might fail white arsenic would succeed, but it is not fair to class all magical potions as preparations of secret poisons, although in point of fact most of the hypnotic drugs are toxic.

The methods of administering the drugs are two—namely, by draught, that is to say by direct consumption, and inhalation. The function of the incense used in thaumaturgical ceremonies was primarily to intoxicate the audience.

Just as the Pythoness of the Delphic oracles

inhaled the vapours of the magic cave, so the Egyptians inhaled prepared incenses in their temples. The casting of herbs upon the fire, the burning of prepared sacrificial candles or flambeaux, all these play their part in the mechanical induction of the psychic state.

Frankincense and myrrh, and in particular gum benzoin, possess soothing properties that effect the throat and nasal passages. Besides being pleasant, these gums formed an excellent vehicle for disguising the scent of other matters and preventing their spasmodic or instant action on the throat.

The kyphic or incense of ancient Egypt* was compounded of myrrh, gum-mastic, aromatic rush roots, resin, and juniper berries. To these aromatics were added small quantities of symbolic elements, such as grapes, honey and wine, and a portion of bitumen or *asphalteum,* whose purpose might be either symbolic or to serve as a binding medium for the mass.

In addition to these, various spices and perfumes were used. Cinnamon bark, sandalwood, cardamom, and even ambergris and musk. The

* See Ebers papyri.

influence of scent upon the emotions is well known and the Egyptians favoured the use of ambra and musk as definitely aphrodisiacal perfumes. To-day pure essence of patchouli is used in the Orient to serve the same end, and anybody who has ever smelt a vial of the pure oil will recognize the instant disturbance of certain nerve centres that it produces.

The clue to the secret of the ancient incense lies not in what we have been able to recover from the papyri, but in the word itself. Kyphi is recognizable to-day in "keef," the popular name for the smokable variety of the herb cannabis indica.

Cannabis indica is none other than our old friend hashish, the haseesh of the writers of the time of the Crusades, who gave us those descriptions of the Old Man of the Mountains and his Hasch-hassins. From them we get our commonplace word—assassin.

It is not, after all, a far cry from the mysteries of Osiris in Egypt to the Thammur or *Dumuri-absu* of Syria and Babylon.

"Thammur came next behind
Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured

> The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
> In amorous ditties all a summer's day,"

says Milton.

Osiris and Thammus "died" annually, and mimicry of the symbolic event was the basis of all ritual. In the mysteries the initiates "died," too, but the death was no mere formula, but an actually induced state of stupor of deep trance brought about by the fumes of the "keef."

These secrets lingered long in Lebanon, where to this day the Crypto-christianity of the Druses may be identified with many of the actual practices of magic.

The master of the Assassins was a master hypnotist, using the dark knowledge of certain parts of the mechanical ritual of magic to gain his mastery over the Moslem youths he sent as fanatics to do his bidding.

There in the Lebanon he created his artificial paradise of sensuous delight, drugged dreams and slumber. His commands laid upon his slaves were no ordinary commands—but spells as black as any weaved by sorcery.

The master lodge of this cult of the Assassins was at Cairo and the mysteries were only trans-

ferred to their new setting in the Lebanon by Hassan ibn Sabbah at the end of the eleventh century. Outwardly Moslem, the inner mysteries had no connection with either Mohammedan or any other religion, and indeed the cult seems to be in many ways a kind of bastard Masonic organization.

Nominally a Moslem sect of Ismailites, the organization was under a commander, the *Sheik-al-Tebel,* or Chief of the Mountains, who was served by minor chiefs or priors—the three *Dai-al-kirbal.* Following these came the *Dais* or adepts, and below them three minor grades, *Refigos, Fedais,* and *Lasigos.**

The Fedais or "entered apprentice" grade furnished the rank and file of the fanatical executants of the paramount will, and these Fedais, who were customarily mentally and physically pathic, never rose above this step in the mysteries.

The Society of the Assassins was nominally suppressed by Halaga, the Mogul invader of the middle of the thirteenth century, but the

* See *Geschichte der Asassinen.* By T. von Hammer. Burgstall, *Un Grand Maître des Assassins au Temps du Saladin.* Also *Ars Quatuo Coronati,* Vol. ——

knowledge, the secrets, and the traditions endured and still endure to this day.

The organization was undoubtedly an evil one; it also had nothing to do with Masonry, but it is an interesting example of an occult society whose powers affected the course of history, and methods of working were essentially based upon mechanical rather than spiritual methods of producing a certain state of mind.

The effect of hashish is a very difficult thing to define. Essentially a hypnotic—an annihilator of time and space and a stimulant of hallucinations—it is also a drug largely dependent on the idiosyncracy of the individual. The same does not necessarily produce equivalent results in individuals of differing temperament, and for all practical purposes the psychic value of the dose varies inversely with the standard of intelligence of the recipient. Also, when dealing with subjects of dual or multiple personality, it tends to liberate the more violent and uncontrolled of the individualities.

Hashish is absorbed rapidly. Cases have been known where a little of the extract used as an

anodyne in corn plasters has been absorbed and produced hallucinatory state. As a smoke, veiled by incense or mixed with tobacco, rapid intoxication results from its inhalation. This was one of the keys—perhaps the greatest of the keys—to the storehouse of those treasures of the mind which are the time Elixir, the True Gold of the Magi.

In actual practice there is a preliminary state of suggestibility under the influence of hashish when the operator can exercise his will upon that of the subject. This stage is soon passed over and in the later dream states suggestion is inoperative.

The modern pharmacist has lost the secret of the herb whose therapeutic function is to control the action of the cannabis indica, so that the subject remained in the suggestible state and did not pass on to the later stages of hallucinatory visions.

We may take it that so far as the old world is concerned, the half of the secret has been recovered, but the balancing or deterrent herb is still unrecognized by the pharmacopœia and known only to a specialist few among experi-

mental occultists. Just as hashish itself is missing from the recipient, the Ebers papyri, so is the balancing coefficient.*

On the other hand, the same secret of priestcraft is known on the other side of the Atlantic. We may or may not believe in the myth of lost Atlantis and the transmitted ritual, but both the Zaquis of Sonora and the Tamachecks of Guatemala possess a ritual observance in which cannabis Americana, a new cousin of the cannabis indica, is the stimulant agent.

Other tribes use a brew of the mescal bean, but this a purely American species and the active principle anhalonium,† does not act on precisely the same nerve centres as the cannabinote principle of the hemps.

In both cases the induction of a species of intoxication by means of the sacred herbs gathered in certain lunar or astrological aspects is held by the natives to be the basis of the communion with the spirits of the departed dead. The Spiritualist believes that there are spirits of the dead, the physiologist claims that the

* The public interest would not be served by the revelation of the second missing ingredient, but it is now known.

† See monograph on *Mescal* by Havelock Ellis.

"spirits" are hallucinatory or that they are merely reflex as from the subconscious mind of the individual or of other individuals. This twin explanation runs through all psychic phenomena, but not until all phenomena known to be produced by Spiritualist circles can be produced under hynopsis will the Spiritualist theory be finally disproved.

The rank and file of Spiritualists are unaware that the scientific world has a demonstrable answer to nine-tenths of the wonder that the believing Spiritualist is convinced can only occur by means of discarnate spirit intelligences. But the honest investigator should bear in mind that only certain rare phenomena remain unchallenged and are at present unattainable by practising psychologists.

When the phenomena of materialization—the externalization of force—are producible by hypnotists, then the whole spirit hypothesis is imperilled, for the scientists will be able to produce these effects not by spirit intervention but at the behest of human will.

Still, for the moment, the uncritical white, like the barbarous Indian, is justified in his be-

lief in external spirit agency as the only explanation for the apparently miraculous.

A friend of mine who had been a member of an exploring expedition whose mission was to trace a tributary of the river Usmacinta in Chiapas on the Mexico–Guatemala border to its source in the volcanic country round the unknown Lago de Peten, made a careful study of the ritual of the Tamachacks.

These people still carry out a pre-Columbian religion which antedates that of the Aztec and Toltec civilizations both of Mexico and the Yucatan peninsula.

Essentially symbolic in that it takes into account primitive nature and ancestor worship, the basis of the cult is the evocation of the spirits of the departed dead for tribal and personal counsel and consultation. The means employed in the production of the psychic state is the smoke of the *cannabis americana.* The native name of this herb is *marihuana.*

The following is my friend's description of one of the actual native ceremonies at which he was present:

"We were up in the Intamal country about

four days' hard river travelling beyond the San Cristobal frontier. Little by little, the isolated plantations disappeared, and soon we were deep in the untouched jungle country where there are only native villages.

"That day I was with the advance party, and as we were making a fairly complete cadastral survey of our route, we deviated slightly toward a largish jungle-covered hill that would furnish us with an excellent commanding position for triangulation.

"My native peons were carrying our little transit theodolite and we were following a native track that led toward the hill when our party was suddenly surrounded.

"A whistle blew in the jungle and out from the bush came semi-nude Indians variously armed. A few had trade guns, but the bulk carried the inevitable machete, while a minority had short bows and long quivers of obsidian-headed arrows.

"They offered us no overt violence, but made it abundantly clear that they resented any party attempting to scale their hill. Most of the dialogue was in the native tongue, a debased ag-

glutinative inflective speech similar to Nanhatl. The leader, who wore a peculiar breastplate of featherwork, could, however, talk Spanish comparatively fluently.

"My greatest trouble was to induce him to understand that we were not a prospecting party and were not after gold. Talk with our men who had been with us some months finally reassured him. A chance compliment of mine about his feather breastplate, which was of quetzal feathers, opened the magic door to me.

"It was astonishing to that Indian, who had probably not seen a hundred white men, as distinct from Mexicans, in all his life, to find in me a man who knew more about the mythological importance of the quetzal bird than he knew himself.

"My work on the ruined cities of Yucatan and my studies of the Mittall codices and similar work had given me a sound knowledge of the worship of Quetzalcoatl the god of the Morning Star, to whom the wonderful emerald-plumaged quetzal bird is sacred.

"To cut a long story short, I arranged things with the head-man so that we could camp in his

village that night. The people were kindly, once they understood that we were not gold hunters and meant no harm, and my friend the head-man, having introduced me to certain elders and discussed with them my knowledge of their almost extinct faith, invited me to be present as a participant in a religious feast to be held that night.

"The feast was that of the Cozca cuaptli—the feast of vultures, birds as important in the Mayan underworld as in the Egyptian ceremonies.

"Shortly after dusk I left the village with them, going alone and to all external seeming unarmed. We made a long journey through the bush, climbing higher all the time, and I realized that we were actually on the sacred hill that they had forbidden us to ascend.

"Here and there along the route we were stopped by sentries or guards, but at last gained the top of the hill. Here, encircled by trees, was a flat table top or plateau a few acres in extent.

"Rising on the plateau was a series of three square terraces culminating in a small ruined

building, roofless yet sound as to its walls. The lowest plateau was packed with Indians; on the second were congregated the elect—the tribal seniors and the priests. Above them a figure or two moved in the building.

"My friends took some time explaining my presence, and it was obvious that I was regarded with dark disfavour by the mass of the natives. Soon it dawned on me that I was under guard, an unobtrusive guard, but nevertheless under guard. At last I was taken to the high priest of the ceremonial.

"He was a wonderful old Indian who spoke the accented Latin Spanish of forgotten generations. He examined me, and though I could not reply to certain mysterious ritualistic questions that he put to me, he was at length satisfied that I had an efficient working knowledge not only of his ritual but of its underlying astronomical and philosophical significance. Eventually he was satisfied, and on a word from him I was taken in hand by two native youths who bound a fillet of red-dyed wool worked with feather devices round my brow and gave me a peeled rod surmounted by a vulture's skull to

hold as a wand of office. Over my clothes was put a loose dark brown cotton robe sewn with charms and trimmed at each shoulder with tufts of sombre plumage.

"Thus dressed I took my place among the elders. For a while nothing happened, then slowly the noise of the crowd died down and expectancy gave place to clamour. From somewhere in the forest came the sudden rhythm of native drums seemingly casual, inopportune, and meaninglessly cadenced.

"Little by little the monotony of the drum throbbing became more insistent, more definitely rhythmical. A brazier in the temple building began to glow red, and far below in the valley mists we could see a group of flaring torches dancing like fireflies as their bearers scaled the difficult trail.

"Suddenly the voice of the chief priest rose in a high-pitched wailing call, and as he hailed, a new and brilliant star seemed to spring into being over the dark crest of a nearby hill.

"The assemblage bowed to the star and broke into a wailing Indian chant that kept time to the beating of the hidden throbbing drums.

"After the prayer came the dance. To the centre of the second terrace bearers carried what looked like a bundle of blankets; then nude but for feather adornments, the young initiates came forward in processional dance. Every tenth man held a torch, and the dancers carried out a long ballet symbolical of the burial or consumption of the mortal body of the vultures.

"They hopped grotesquely like the ill-omened zopilotes or scavenger vultures they initiated. A querulous clucking accompaniment was uttered by the chorus of spectators and the files of bronze bodies advanced and retreated, swayed and circled in slow-hopping processions around the blanketed heap upon the ground that represented the body.

"Suddenly the drum rhythm changed and a curious whistling pipe music was heard. The heap of blankets stirred and rattled, from the heap an arm flung out white bones, a skull rolled to the feet of the spectators, then the blankets were flung aside and an Indian youth, completely nude, but painted white and marked with ritual signs, leapt from the pile.

"Rising to his full height he donned a towering feather headdress of humming bird and quetzal feathers which gleamed like a myriad jewels in the torchlight.

"Three times the spectators claimed him as the risen God, then the drums broke out into a violent triumphant dance in an infectious measure in which both dancers and spectators joined.

"In the meantime a cloth or canvas housing had been drawn over the roofless temple by minor priests. The brazier was carried inside, and suddenly the Boy God, leaving the dancers, ascended the steps and entered the prepared pavilion.

"As suddenly the drums fell silent and the shrill pipes alone kept up the eerie tune.

"My friend touched me on the shoulder, the seated elders rose, and, following the high priest, we made our way into the sanctuary.

"Ranging ourselves along the walls we sat down in an open square. In the centre was the youth stretched on a skin-covered native bedstead, at its head the brazier.

"Swiftly the door was sealed with skin mats;

then to the accompaniment of a muttered ritual and much raising and lowering of skull-tipped wands, the priest cast herbs into the brazier. The heavy smoke wreathed about in the close room and a sense of languor fell upon me.

"Right and left I could hear the elders inhaling the vapour, then one after another they succumbed to its influence. Then came an invocation to the spirits, and the old men began to talk to spirits that they alone could see among the hazy, drug-laden smoke of the lodge.

"As if inspired, the boy uttered oracular wisdom, now answering questions put to him, now declaiming what he had heard the spirits say. Slowly the drug gained in its effect over me. The painted leather screens on the rude walls became instinct with life, the crude stone carving seemed alive and writhing, and all the air seemed charged with flashing processions of colours and sonorous music.

" I must have been overcome by the fumes, for I remember nothing more till I came to in the dawn-light in one of the terraces outside the building. They gave me a calabash of herb-scented goat's milk to drink, and in a moment or

two my brain cleared. . . . I made it my interest to get some of the marihuana herb, which I send you."

Analysis of the marihuana revealed that it contained about twenty-five per cent. admixture of other herbs in addition to the main base of *cannabis americana.* A gum or sap exudation of an aromatic nature served to bind the mass together.

A personal experiment carried out with a small portion of the mixture proved that identical hallucinatory results could be induced by its use in a London room as well as on the top of a Guatemalan Tescalli. Of a party of four, three saw colour visions, two heard music, and one described figures of Mazan mythology with some exactness. As, however, we all know the origin of the incense and its connection, these latter visions may be more properly ascribed to suggestion than held to have objective existence as spirit phenomena.

There is reason to believe that other plants, and possibly some synthetic products, have the same peculiar properties of the liberation of the "psyche." In the same way, although con-

sumption as a draught or as an inhaled smoke veiled by incense are the ritual ways of achieving a physiological result, the same might be achieved by spraying a solution into the air, by absorption through the skin (this may have been the *raison d'être* of some "witch ointments"), or by hypodermic injection.

Needless to say, any attempt to experiment in these matters is extremely unwise and dangerous.

CHAPTER VIII

BEASTS AND ELEMENTALS

The apparitions customarily seen by those who are clairvoyant or psychic are those that take human form.

In many cases they represent known humans who have passed over, but sometimes we are brought into contact with non-human apparitions.

These may be semi-human or demoniac forms, they may be animal forms, or they may be simply manifestations of elemental forces. Discarding the trumpery attempts at classification that have been advanced by one or two writers of so-called "ghost stories," it must be recognized that the occultist is faced with problems that cannot be readily reduced or explained by any logical hypothesis.

The Spiritualist approaches the question according to set theories. "Spirits," says he,

"can do anything. They take what shape they will. Why they do so is a mystery."

The woman Spiritualist is usually as open to believe that the spirit of her beloved Pekingese or Pomeranian can return in astral form, and ascribes it to the influences of love. "Love me, love my dog," appears to furnish as good an explanation of animal manifestation as any.

On the other hand, when you get some absolutely extraordinary manifestations such as the seal that appeared to Sir Garnet Wolseley,* or the materialization of vampire bats, partially developed monkeys or a full-sized goat,—and I have known all these to occur,—then the love theory falls down badly, and we must seek a more reasonable explanation.

If we accept the idea of discarnate spirit intelligences we certainly should not accept them all at face value as good. The bulk of humanity that has passed over has not been good, or for the matter of that, Christian.

Assuming that these spirits were human, but took bestial form for purposes of their own, we

* Mr. Gambier Bolton, who was present, assures me of the reality of this inexplicable incident.

may find some glimmerings of support for a new theory when we realize that in the past and in the present idolatry prevails. The idols of savages are usually totemistic. And they held that the identity of soul persisted after death, not in a new human existence but as a rebirth in animal form.

To a large extent, totemistic paganism was mixed up with licentious and bestial festivals, useful in assuring the continuance and multiplication of a savage tribe, but evolving practices repugnant to Western ethics.

The beasts that come back—are beastly. The ghost dog that scratches and paws and leaps into its mistress's lap is a very different thing to that which it pretends to be. When we reach the foulness of the goat or bat manifestations we feel with no shadow of doubt that we are in touch with the unmasked spirits of evil. Not only visible form, but touch and smell are present. We are brought into distinct contact with the sardonic mocking terror that lies on the other side of life.

The border between the brutal and blood-lusting savage and the demon, is a slender one.

The conception of a singularly evil earth-bound negro spirit who has believed in an after-life in which his soul will inhabit the body of an ape or a leopard, comes very close to the accepted idea of a devil or demon.

We get something of the same basic conception in the idea of the wer-wolf or vampire, and there is a singular reinforcement of this theory in that in the Dark Ages when paganism was yielding reluctantly to the inroads of the Christian faith, the early fathers explicitly identified such animal manifestations with the sorcery of paganism. The fantastic gargoyles that ornament cathedrals are simply traditionalizations of that period when these beast incarnations in all their devilishness contended against the spread of a purer faith.

Sometimes it chances that we, in this twentieth century, by accident open a door through which a tenth-century devil can creep in.

Other occultists, notably those of the Viennese school, hold that the beast manifestations are not forms or shapes assumed by evil spirits that have been mortal, but are, as it were, living evil thought-forms, and are the incarnation of

dead and evil cults on which a great deal of human thought-energy had been expended during some time in the world's history.

Proof is not possible, and it is not yet the time to marshal the facts which would seem to indicate that a dead cultus can yet live on, supported, as it were, by the emotional sin of the present-day world, although the sin is divorced from its old ritual significance. This theory of the continuation of the sacrificial value of sin is of course one of the most serious aspects of the art of sorcery. Propitiation and symbolism are often linked up in a way that perplexes the most agile-witted student of the occult, and it may well be that certain seemingly innocent ritual acts have contributed their quota to the maintenance of life in certain forgotten cults—whose entities come suddenly into being again in a most alarming manner.

To the occultist who thinks this matter out, the identity of beast materializations with incarnate prototypes of sin will probably be manifest.

As it is, the essential quality of the evil that these entities typify and attempt to induce does

not become apparent from a chance unsought materialization, but the medium who sees "animals" is suspect.

Repeated evocations of these entities lead to disaster. The beast becomes an obsession and is to all intents and purposes the old "familiar" of the days of witchcraft.

For reasons which are hinted at above, but which cannot be more fully expounded in a book of this nature, the beast materialization is a phenomenon which should be avoided at all costs. If such occurs at a séance, break off the sitting at once. If these phenomena appear to be connected with any particular medium, there are the gravest reasons for seeking another sensitive. Above all things, avoid people who claim that the spirits of pet animals have come back to them.

The cynic may contend that it is folly to be afraid of the spirits of poor dumb animals and yet invite communication with the mortal dead. The occultist and the mystic who know something of the mysteries will, however, see the reasons. To-day, when thousands are interested in psychical matters, knowledge has been

forgotten or trampled underfoot. The well-meaning, loud-voiced blind lead myriads to a new heaven, acclaiming hell vanquished because in their rapturous exultation over new discoveries of old things they have forgotten the absolute rule of balance. Positive and Negative, Good and Bad, Strong and Weak, Plus or Minus.

There is balance in all things, and this sudden acclamation of the Unseen World as all good, all easy, and quite safe, is perfectly ridiculous.

Occultism is not either good, safe, nor amusing for the vast majority of people. Spiritualism as generally practised is a kind of beneficent bobbing into the Tom Tiddler's ground of the Unseen. There is a pleasing conceit that if the Powers of Evil turn up it will be enough to utter a Protestant prayer and say that because you are "good" a bogy can't touch you.

This is a rather childish way of treating the Powers—in point of fact, it does not work, it is very much like saying that lightning cannot strike you because you have rubber heels to your boots.

It is a melancholy reflection that the very people who go about reading little handbooks on "Knowledge is Power," never realize that it is the right use of knowledge that means Power and that sometimes the coming of Power without knowledge spells catastrophe for all concerned.

Besides the dangerous and perplexing beast manifestations, there is a third class of phenomenon which is manifestly neither human nor animal, but bears a close relationship to Elemental Forces such as Fire, Air, or Water. These phenomena are the only ones properly described as due to elementals, but a certain confusion has arisen through the use of this word as applied to all spirit phenomena which were not broadly classifiable as human.

Ghosts, giant appearances, and ferocious and evil spirits of all kinds have been described as elementals, so that the word has lost its real precision. Originally all these outside spirits not known as the souls of mortals were classed as being spirits of Earth or Fire, Air, or Water, and by this arbitrary relation to the elements became known as Elementals.

In effect only phenomena where no apparent organic or physical materialization or incarnation of any kind occurs should be classified as purely elemental.

Of these the heat elemental is a phenomenon that is occasionally observed. Air or wind phenomena are also known, but I know of no case where earth or water phenomena apart from "apports" by a materialized presence claiming to be an earth or water elemental, have been noted. To my mind the organic presence destroys the evidential value of the latter accounts due to the effect of elementals as distinct from spirits.

The elementals are properly those intelligences (the word spirits conveys a wrong implication) that are termed in the old rituals the Powers of Fire, Air, Earth, and Water. In magic it was held that these Powers were served by spirits, but there is reason to suppose that this view rose from the too literal interpretation of the old rituals and maltranslation of the occult "Grimoires" of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The appearance of these elementals is rare

and sporadic, usually associated with a place or an individual rather than with the sitting of a séance.

Sometimes the individual afflicted by the elemental is affected in a negative manner—that is to say, he is immune to the effect of fire or heat or has the power of inducing enormous draughts and air disturbances in confined space without knowing why.

These cases are difficult, and though a "fire-proof" medium who can carry live coals in his hand may claim it to be due to the effect of a fire-elemental control, it must be remembered that in many cases autosuggestion will induce an extension of the protective ecto- or psychoplasm which is equally effective.* The South Sea and Indian fanatics who walk across red-hot stones indubitably possess this self-contained power.

I have only a secondhand instance of a pure heat elemental to relate. This was communicated to me by a very well-known

* The really genuine fire medium can hold a red-hot coal or glowing asbestos from the gas fire on the palm of the hand for two minutes. No shorter duration of time should be accepted.

mountain painter whom we will call Calvin Muir.

He had been down in the Welsh Marches where the low foothills of the mountains just change into stretches of rocky moors above the low-lying wooded valleys.

Muir was by habit and training a keen observer. He was also a Frater of the Rosicrucian Society and had a wide general knowledge of many strange aspects of occultism.

"I was staying down at Pwhyll-gor, a little hill village with a few cottages and two inns of small attractiveness," said he. "I had been there some six weeks or so, sketching and wandering and doing a little trout fishing when the mood took me. One evening I found the taproom learnedly discussing the blight that was affecting an orchard in a nearby farm.

"According to them, half the affected trees appeared burnt or seared and there was great discussion whether lightning could strike without a concurrent storm or thunderclap.

"Others held that it was probably a mischievous trick by small boys, but one old man declared it had happened before in the same dis-

trict in his father's time and that it was due to 'owl blasting.'

"This, it seemed, was a form of witchcraft or magic, but more closely related to the malevolent forces of nature than to mortal ill will. He was not communicative, but disclosed enough to make me determine to visit the farm next day.

"I found it up on the hillside in a little natural valley or gap where a few fertile acres had been reclaimed. It was a poor enough small homestead, bleak and barren, and the wretched little orchard was poor enough in all conscience without suffering supernatural violences.

"The farmer's wife received me and made no secret of her troubles. Together we went out to view the damage, and I found two cider-apple trees whose foliage and fruit had been literally burnt in an area as large as a good-sized cart wheel.

"That was the queer thing about it, the close circular or rather spherical limits of the damage. It was just as if a red-hot round bite had been taken out of the thick of the tree, and

left the neighbour twigs and leaves unsinged—unseared.

"They had no explanation to offer except lightning, and it was manifest they had no real belief in that. I suggested boys, but was told there was but one about the farm—even as I made the suggestion I knew it was futile; but what would you?

"I asked when the calamity occurred, and they told me in full daytime between dawn and lunch. In the morning all had been well in the orchard—by noon two trees half ruined, and no one had seen sight of smoke or flame, nor sound.

"The suggestion of 'owl blasting' brought no response. They were strangers to the country, having come some ten years ago from Swansea way.

" 'It's the hills,' said the woman.

" 'Well,' said I, 'another watcher will do no harm. Can you give me a shakedown, and to-morrow I will go out with my easel and stay sketching the orchard.'

"She assented without enthusiasm, and I spent that night at the farm.

"The farmer was no wiser and rather surlier than his wife, but both were manifestly oppressed with fear. Their boy alone was cheerful and unmoved.

"The next day I rose at cock-crow, passed through the orchard and out on to the hills to a patch of rock and heather some two hundred yards away.

"By seven o'clock I had watched in a good stretch of the farm and the orchard in which not a soul had moved. All at once, I stood with my brush poised in amazement, as there high above the trees was poised a small, blue-yellow lambent flame that seemed to drift sideways in the windless air.

"For a moment I thought it was a fire balloon, then saw my error. Without a thought I ran toward it just in time to see it settle down on to a tree whose leaves in a moment turned from green to darkening brown and burst almost immediately into crackling flame. My cries brought out the boy and the woman from the house and on their coming it vanished and we were left gazing at the damage it had done.

"I told them what I had seen, and the woman

suddenly put her apron over her face and burst into tears. We sent the boy to fetch her husband, who came in a marked state of worry and agitation.

"I could not follow the quick interchange of Welsh words that ensued. The man then asked me who had told me of 'owl blasting,' and together we went to the village to find the old man.

"It appeared that a month or so back the farmer had used some old rocks which were part of the ring of a Cromlech to rebuild one of his stone walls. This, according to the old man, had brought down the 'owl blasting' upon him.

"Painstakingly they dragged the stones back to their original place, and I believe certain ceremonial was gone through at the next quarter of the moon.

"The precise things done were kept secret from me, for I was a stranger and suspect, but I gathered enough to understand that a mercenary destruction or disturbance of Druidic remains brought its own reward.

"All that I can say is that a ball of fire came

out of clear sky quite slowly and destroyed part of the foliage of an apple tree under conditions precluding any human agency."

The above is Calvin Muir's account. To an occultist the connection between the Power of Fire and the violation of a Cromlech is convincing, but it is difficult to conceive in what manner the Powers were propitiated.

Scientific people have suggested slow-drying phosphorus solution as an explanation of an apparently supernatural occurrence. Muir, on the other hand, was positive that it was a true manifestation of a fire elemental, and that the old man who knew about "owl blasting" was not an interested or malevolent party in a peasant's plot.

So far, no hypothesis that will serve as a rational explanation of all the facts has ever been advanced.

CHAPTER IX

POSSESSION

From time to time we come across cases of demoniacal possession. In these there is apparently the permanent or temporary domination of the soul or mind of the victim by an evil spirit or demon of alien personality.

Cases of possession are invariably claimed as "proofs" of the existence of spirit intelligence, and in cases where the possession is nominally at least a mild one the possessed are sometimes quite proud of it. It is, in fact, exhibited as quaint and dreadful deformity would be—the phrase is exact. It is a mental deformity.

Now, it must be understood that the psychologists have of late years made enormous strides in their knowledge of the vagaries of the subconscious mind. Possession, like "shell shock," is in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred a perfectly curable disease. It springs from a per-

version of the subconscious state, can be diagnosed by psychoanalysis and eradicated by transference or by suggestion.

The processes of Christian exorcism often attained the same result. The wise priest was able to "cast out demons," and medical science of to-day, working by analytical methods rather than by rule of thumb, achieves the same results.

Whether one accepts the scientific theory that these "possessions" are but multiple personalities and that there may be several mental personalities in the one mind, or whether one believes the idea of spirit influence, does not much matter. In any case the doors of the mind can be firmly locked on either spirit or mental disease. Possession is curable—if the patient really desires to be cured.

Possession can be readily evoked in nearly all hypnotic subjects. Not only one but several distinct personalities can be developed by the psychologist. Janet's experiments developed in Madame B. three separate individuals: Léonie, known in the waking state as a "possessor"; Léontine under the light stage of

hypnosis, and Léonore in a deeper condition.*

Even a popular knowledge and comprehension of this peculiar disease of the subconscious is difficult to attain without a sound elementary grasp of the principles of psychology. The bulk of books on the subject are written for the medical or scientific mind, but Coriat's book is a sound and easily grasped introductory manual.†

The normal form of mental trouble is an obsession, the fear or "phobia" of some perfectly normal thing, a desire to touch objects. There are dozens of variations of these obsessions which spring to mind. The state of possession can only be said to exist when the mind is under the dominance of another individuality distinct from the normal personality.

It is curious to note that cases of possession by good spirits are absolutely unknown. A medium may be "controlled" by spirits said to be good, but this does not amount to a possession. In every case where normal personality has been overthrown and another or

* Pierre Janet: *L'automatisme Psychologique.*
† *Abnormal Psychology.* Isador H. Coriat. Rider, 1911.

other personalities take possession we find—evil.

This is to certain extent explicable if we realize that every thought or wish that occurs to us, and which we *repress* because it is bad or evil, is not destroyed or wiped out of existence, but stays as a suppressed desire or wish buried in the recesses of subconscious mind.

When normal conscious control is overthrown, these subconsciously stored desires or wishes come bubbling up—a fact that seems to explain why the language used by nicely brought up girls recovering after the administration of an anæsthetic would put a coal-heaver to flight.

In the dream-state, too, these repressed desires escape all mixed up from their bondage, a fact which accounts for the peculiar medley of dreams and their frequent lack of moral balance and accentuation of sexual characteristics.

The character of a "possessing" demon is in most cases determined by experiences that the victim has passed through. Shock, neurasthenia, illness, disappointment; all these may bring about the splitting of the personality so

that the secondary or possessing personality can overthrow consciousness and take charge.

The victim is often horrified to find his or her mind continually filled with terrible desires, intolerable passions, and thoughts utterly repugnant to the sedate conscious self.

Sometimes the idea of possession is stimulated by messages received through mediums or by automatic writing—this is one of the many frequent cases where undigested, uneducated Spiritualism is often abominably harmful. Anything that helps the idea of possession to grow in the afflicted mind should be avoided.

Gradually the nature of the possession becomes more acutely defined and is recognized as a different personality—an evil personality resident in the same body using the same mind. It is in all human probability only the repressed wishes—all the pent-up unfulfilled evil of a lifetime taking shape and urging gratification rather than repression in a new and secondary personality.

Possession by evil spirits is invariably connected with violence and vice. Sometimes the attacks are periodic; always they are signs of

mental instability and psychic disease. A possessed person is a fit subject for psychotherapeutic treatment by qualified medical men, but a source of very real psychic danger in a séance or as a subject for well-meaning experiments in faith healing by amateurs.

In psychic healing the doctrine of sacrifice and the scapegoat had a very literal interpretation. The healer often takes upon his own soul the burden that he lifts from another. This psychic transference can only be done in safety by certain and specific ways beyond the scope of this work. It is sufficient to indicate the danger.

Possession in its varying aspects has given rise to many myths and legends. Larvæ, Incubi, and Succubi were all demons of temporary possession that tempted man. In the Middle Ages and far later the Faith strove lustily with them, and where exorcism failed the stake was found effective.

According to the older writers, Incubi were male demons who possessed the bodies of mortal women; Succubi, she-devils who seduced the souls and possessed the bodies of men.

Sorcerers had the power of despatching these erotic demons to gratify their associates or plague their enemies, and it is notable that this doctrine of vicarious enjoyment or satisfaction reappears in the Spiritualist belief in gross and earth-bound souls of sinners who haunt drinking booths and houses of ill-fame, deriving vicarious satisfaction from the sins of the living.

The old demonographers give lurid and disgustful accounts of these "possessions" * and insist on their contagious nature. Prosecutions for sorcery, "possession," and similar crimes raged throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and in the pages of the records we can trace the Incubi and Succubi now hidden as familiar spirits, now described as the devil himself, but curiously true in their nature to the occasional demoniac possessions that trouble the twentieth century.

Even if one admits that the average "possession" is one's own evil subconscious personality attempting to overthrow the conscious mind, certain questions and possibilities arise.

* See *Tableau de L'Inconstance des Démons.* Pierre de Lancre.

That the astral body or mind can make discarnate journeys is a well-known fact to all Spiritualists. There is, then, no reason to suppose that this faculty would be less material in a possessive personality whose origin was specifically in the dream realm of the subconscious.

Indeed, it is far more plausible to suppose that the possessor or demon mind would find it far easier to make the journey than the other personality, for it is recognized that the release of the actual body occurs in trance or dream state.

We have here, then, some possible psychic explanation of many of the cases of sorcery where the complaint of the sufferers was that they were victimized during sleep by demons. In other words, they were the recipients of undesired attentions by the astral body of either the sorcerer or his followers or associates.

This has been suggested to me in various forms by people who have believed themselves the victims of discarnate spirits—and who were at times possessed by them against their wills. It must, however, be admitted that in all such cases which came under my notice there had

been connection with Spiritualist circles or with minor forms of occultism, and it was impossible to exclude the possibility of previous hypnosis, autosuggestion, or the little known but common phenomena of psychic invasion—by other members of the circle.

Viewed from the psychical point of view, possession is an extremely difficult problem. Real spirit possession might occur, suggestion or psychic invasion is often indicated; and, as I have explained, multiple personality and the concentration of evil repressed desires in the secondary individuality furnishes a complete scientific explanation of the phenomenon.

These cases must be taken individually, and there are not yet grounds for laying down a general explanation of all the phenomena. One of the great difficulties is the natural reluctance of the victims to disclose exact details, but no case of possession which was not either openly or secretly erotic is known to be recorded.

Possessions fall under two heads: those in which the possessing spirit urges the victim to the commission of injurious acts in person, and thereby derives direct satisfaction through the

body; and those in which a vicarious satisfaction is achieved through the astral body. The possibility of intercourse between spirit and mortal has been held to be a possibility since Biblical times, and the expulsion of the fallen angels was due to this sin.*

Stainton Moses held that much of the lower phenomena was caused by spirits who had not yet reached man's plane of intelligence, just as some was produced by others who had proceeded further and returned to enlighten man.† This belief occurs in folklore, in Oriental religions, and in a myriad variations.

The djinn of the *Arabian Nights* is a very real thing to the modern native, and a considerable literature exists in which the intercourse between djinn and mortal is the main theme. In the same way the belief in fairy wives or husbands is not so long dead in Europe and alive to-day among the hill tribes of the Pamirs.

The whole theory of spirit possession or demon possession is linked with this idea. In the "possessed" state the victim is unconscious

* Jude VI, 7.
† Stainton Moses, *Spirit Identity*, Appendix II.

of deeds done and words said. The blame is the blame of the demon.

In nine cases out of ten frenzy or hysteria accompanies nominal possession. There are gifts of strange tongues usually said to be Eastern or Indian, and the possessed pour out streams of gibberish in which a few dominant words or phrases bearing a slight resemblance to some known tongue may be distinguished.

Clairvoyance, the gift of prophecy, and other psychic qualities appear at the time of the seizure. Often there is marked anæsthesia and insensitiveness to pain. Hot objects may be handled with impunity, electric shocks are not felt.

These cases are not genuine cases of possession in its worst sense when they begin, but very frequently the victim is urged by fools to develop these wonderful powers and the Darker Powers accept the invitation and step in.

The occultist and the scientist agree about very few things, but both agree that possession and surrender to possession are the first steps to moral and physical disaster. The transferable or infectious quality of possession is not so

widely known as it should be, but with the increase of Spiritualism its effects will in a year or so become capable of perception by even the most unenlightened.

A girl of my acquaintance, the daughter of wealthy and respectable Midland parents, became interested in psychic matters. Her faith was greater than her powers of discernment and she was, like all too many Spiritualists, of neurotic and hysterical temperament.

Her first actual essays were with automatic writing; then as she was an art student she tried painting under spirit control. Some slight success attended her efforts and she became interested in Egyptian mythology because her spirit paintings were Egyptian in character.

I did not see her frequently, but met her about a year after she had taken up her Egyptian studies. She stated that in her was reincarnated the soul of an Egyptian priest. This invading entity dominated her entire mind and mode of life.

Before, she had been a healthy, normal girl although inclined to be neurotic, but once given over to this obsession she found that owing to

the psychic change of sex all men were repugnant to her. She was possessed by a male mind in a female body, and with this extraordinary inversion of normal feelings was obliged to break off her engagement.

The remainder of her life was short but tragic. Her automatic writings (which were destroyed after her unhappy death at her own hands) showed the ascendancy of the possessing demon as it grew over her. Interspersed with these records were the tragic outpourings of her soul, her self-analysis of her psychic disaster. There were things there terrible to read.

It is not perhaps fair to blame psychic science for disastrous tragedies such as these, but it must be openly admitted that occultism is not for the multitude.

There is nothing known to-day that was not known in the past, but Spiritualists and other investigators have discovered a few of the minor marvels that were known to, but wisely hidden by, the ancients. Sometimes they are like children playing with a box of drugs, some of which are active poisons.

One message of consolation, one instance of subconscious telepathy with a medium, and they are convinced of the truth of Spiritualism and will not be warned that whatever truth it may hold it also holds Untruth and Danger as well as Hope.

The threshold between the innocent "control" and the malevolent "demons of possession" is a very, very narrow one. Sometimes, indeed often, there is no dividing line at all. The charges that Spiritualism is the high road to lunacy have these unfortunate occurrences as their basis.

CHAPTER X

SOME NEW FACTS AND THEORIES

THERE are a number of peculiar phenomena that come under no specific head or grouping at present; that is to say, they are infrequent or isolated instances which cannot yet be relegated to a specific class and labelled.

I have frequently come across hearsay evidence and been unable to find the original observer. In other cases the character or mentality of the observer has been such as to render the account entirely valueless from any point of view except that of sensationalism.

The result is that we are faced with an unusual case which remains mysterious, usually because opportunity for a thorough examination of the phenomena is lacking.

This is perhaps best illustrated by those cases of material phenomena which we class as Poltergeists.

The most recently recorded case was the Cheriton dugout,* but there are many others recorded and a good many more details of which have been suppressed for personal or economic reasons.

Ronald Grey has some interesting notes under this heading to which I will now turn.

The distinguishing characteristics of a poltergeist haunting are aimless violence and mischief accompanied by the displacement and turning about of material objects and unaccompanied by any visible materialization of the manifesting entity.

In many cases these mischievous phenomena are associated directly or indirectly with children or young persons. Sceptics usually attribute the phenomena to pure mischief and a desire to mystify or be revenged on somebody by the child, but I do not hold that this is the true interpretation.

The actual power of physical mediumship is a gift which is in some strange way connected with physiological conditions. It is often more marked in ill-health than when well and some-

* See *The New Revelation.* Sir A. C. Doyle.

times vanishes completely or may return again after a year or two.

It has now been ascertained that the site of the haunting is the functioning factor and that one or other of the humans present is the often unconscious medium. If a known physical medium is substituted for the original one the phenomena will often be as effectively reproduced. The doctrine held by Spiritualists that a poltergeist is a low type of spirit essentially non-human and akin to the tree dryads or earth or air elementals does not seem to be borne out in practice.

Just as many people hold that the bulk of harmless as distinct from malignant apparitions are "thought-impressions" on the surrounding walls which become visible to people with the gift of clairvoyance, so are there some grounds for believing that the poltergeist manifestations are due not to any directing intelligence at all but to the permanence of some old act or thought which still has in some cases the power of influencing matter.

Mind cannot affect matter without the influence of a human intermediary. But the

physical medium is a human intermediary and serves as a dynamo or battery for the generation of a necessary force.

Just as table levitations and similar phenomena are produced by the extrusion of psychical rods or levers which are invisible,* but which are directed to a definite task by intelligence, so the poltergeist phenomena seem to be similar phenomena but without any directing intelligence.

This statement needs qualification in the cases where the child medium has become partly aware that in some strange way he or she is the prime motor for the phenomena. Then the child's mind consciously or subconsciously directing the impulse may focus the manifestation in the way of impish, malicious tricks afflicting an individual.

The "psychc force" or psychoplasm extended by the medium is very closely akin to what is termed "animal magnetism"—it seems to be of nervous origin and physiologically connected with internal secretory organs.

* For details of leverage, etc., see: *The Reality of Psychic Phenomena* and *Experiments in Psychical Science.* By W. T. Crawford.

A slight nervous derangement of one of the many complexes associated with the age of puberty may quite conceivably endow occasional children with a transient power of physical mediumship.

The next point is the accumulatory effect of surroundings. Here we are very much in the dark, but the manifestations do not occur unless physical limits, such as walls, are present. In a poltergeisted house two unconscious agents of the activities may, particularly while asleep, but also while awake, saturate the surroundings with this peculiar form of energy.

There is nothing to show that this vitality ceases with death; it certainly continues during the state of sleep, and if it is borne in mind that even when the soul has passed from the body after death, life—that is to say, intense bacterial activity—continues, it is conceivable that the continued extension of this force may continue from unascertained physiological conditions, and so explain some of the baffling and distressing phenomena that have occurred in vaults and given rise to the theory of bodies being buried alive in a cataleptic condition.

More advanced students will see in the foregoing hypothesis the explanation of certain obscure texts relative to the Egyptian processes of embalming, and other religious rituals in connection with the disposal of corpses. The ancients were keenly aware of certain monstrous after-death possibilities which the moderns ignore.

This, then, is where the theory of poltergeist manifestations splits. They are often traceable to

(*a*) Unconscious physical mediums, usually adolescents.

(*b*) In certain difficult cases the human element has been eliminated, and the only hypothesis is the sudden manifestation of a latent force derived from the dead.

It should be remembered that the graves of saints become shrines and that miracles are attributed to them, and that certain most terrible vampire phenomena are associated with some unsanctified graves.

Just as the hair and nails of some corpses continue to grow to extravagant lengths long after death, so in certain cases it seems as if

the corruption of the flesh were accompanied by a translation of the residual vital force or nervous energy—as distinct from soul or consciousness—into free psychic power.

This energy can apparently be stored in matter such as walls, wood, etc., and seems to have the quality of remaining latent until some unknown cause begins to change it from a static to a "dynamic" condition.

The sorcerer who produces earth from a particular grave and who treasures unholy mortal relics of evil man, is practising more than a mere symbolism. He is using matter whose very body may be impregnated with that peculiar essence or force which is the vehicle of all psychic phenomena.

People who are interested in serving the Powers of Evil have sedulously propagated the idea that, however malignant astral powers may be, there is a law that they cannot harm or injure mortals. This is one of those dangerous statements that Spiritualists make use of without knowing what they are talking about. These powers can be and often have been applied to the most sinister purposes. Utilized by anyone

with occult knowledge and experience they are pregnant with soul- and body-destroying capacities, and it is fair to say that certain other occult powers are the least defence against them.

I am inclined to favour the theory that in all cases of poltergeists, where non-human sources of power are indicated, careful psychic analysis will reveal some inanimate matter which has been in contact with either evil-living mortality or the dead, and is serving as the focus and reservoir of the force. The power appears to be sporadic and cumulative, but it can be destroyed or dissipated both by material and by occult means if it can be traced to its source.

The latent cumulative effect of such an evil relic may possibly stimulate the extension of psychoplasm by unconscious mediums brought within its sphere of influence. This seems indicated where an exchange of physical mediums in the one centre of inflection has produced parallel results. There is also some ground for supposing that the phases of the moon affect the manifestation.

It is, of course, fashionable to deride the moon, but any seaside doctor will admit that his patients die with the ebb of the tide; and, further, it is highly illogical to suppose that an influence which can affect the vast masses of the tides is without its influence on the tenuous fluids of vitality.

The lunar effect is probably due to a screening or projection of specific solar or ethereal vibrations below the range which we see as light and colour and above that which we recognize as electrical phenomena.

"The simple undirected energy display of a poltergeist phenomenon may be converted into a specifically malignant phenomenon. The energy may be used to form a vehicle for an evoked elemental succubus or incubus, or might under certain different conditions be similarly utilized to accommodate or materialize a 'familiar' of a higher order," says Duchesne, writing of some researches carried out in the Var, "but I am still at a loss to know what induces the phenomena to appear with such fulminant energy and purposeless commencement."

. . . . . .

A peculiar case of poltergeist occurred in Hertfordshire last spring.* The farm bailiff of a home farm complained that his cottage, which looked out on the yard of the farmstead, had become intolerable. Crockery was smashed on the dresser, pots and pans flew about while nobody touched them, and when the whole family were at midday lunch in their living-room a kettle of boiling water which was simmering on the kitchener hob was brought through an adjoining open door and slammed down among the diners at the table without spilling a drop.

Stones were thrown, windows broken, and even bedclothes snatched off. I went down in response to an invitation by the owner of the estate and soon convinced myself that the phenomena were authentic.

The family consisted of the bailiff, his wife, a girl of fourteen, and a son of twenty. The latter was not much in the house, being about on the hills with the sheep, as it was lambing time.

Previous experience led one to suspect the girl, who seemed quite honest and very fright-

* Author's note, 1912.

ened at the occurrences. My host and I were personal witnesses of flying stones and still more remarkable the scattering of a big sheaf of straw.

The sheaf was being carried from the barn to the cow-house by the girl herself at about three in the afternoon. We were talking to the bailiff's wife. Suddenly the girl stopped and the big bundle of straw seemed to be lifted out of her arms at least two feet above her head. It balanced for a moment or two like a captive gas balloon, then whirled into thousands of separate straws which flew all about the yard.

No conceivable trick of wind—and it was a wettish, windless day—nor any human effort could have accomplished it. The truss burst like a shell, some of the straws flying right over the roofs of the outbuildings.

The terrified girl burst into tears and ran to her mother for comfort and protection.

That night we sent the girl away, and though manifestations continued for another two days, these were of decreasing violence.

The cottage was only a few years old and no deaths had occurred there, but the farmstead

was a very old one, the estate having a connected history to pre-Tudor times. I was puzzled to find any clue to the exciting cause of the trouble.

I went over the whole place most carefully, but found nothing to guide me, and at last turned my attention to the structure of the cottage. A certain intuition or psychic susceptibility led me to suspect one of the big kitchen rafters which supported the ceiling of the kitchen and the floor of the girl's room.

On inquiry I found that the architect who had designed the new buildings had employed a local contractor and used old red bricks and old timber wherever possible in order to preserve the old-fashioned effect given by weathered colours.

It was not difficult to trace the material; the local contractor's foreman told us at once where it had come from.

"It stood in our yard here for ten years or more before we put it into the new buildings," said the foreman, "and it come to us when we pulled down Blackley Old Grange."

"What kind of a place was that?" said I.

"Private madhouse at the last," he answered. "The owner was a doctor and he went mad and hanged himself, he did, after killing one of the patients a month before. He hanged himself just before the visitors was expected to see the patient he had killed."

. . . . . .

Research carried us no further, except that I learnt that the murdered patient lay for a month in the room in which she was killed before the crime was found out, after the man's suicide. It was impossible to trace the beam to its position, but I gathered that the doctor hanged himself from a window bar or curtain hook, not from the beam.

I am inclined to believe that the absorption of force takes place from prolonged contact with the emanation of the dead rather than from the transient impression of conscious thoughts, but there was no further recrudescence of the trouble when an iron girder was substituted for the beam, and the girl, when brought back, was perfectly normal.

I experimented with the girl later, but did not find that she possessed any marked gifts,

although she was indubitably a good hypnotic subject. The beam, or rather a section of it, I secured for the purposes of research, the remainder was burnt.*

. . . . . .

Another puzzling if popular subject is that of spirit photographs. I have handled scores of them, but have never yet come across one in which all possibility of ingenious fraud has been entirely eliminated.

Certain people have claimed peculiar gifts, but in no case has a satisfactory result been obtained at a genuine test-séance, where scientific precautions have been observed.

If anyone has this gift it can be demonstrated easily. The studio must be neutral ground—that is to say, the room must not be the claimant's habitual studio. The camera must be provided by the testers, as also the dark slide and plates. The medium must be stripped perfectly naked and the same rule should apply to the testing committee if it includes anyone known

* Valuable data were gained by experiment with this disastrous relic. They are not suitable for publication at this stage, and I learnt recently of similar objectionable attributes associated with a battlefield souvenir from near Ypres.

to the medium. He should not be allowed to touch plates, dark slide, or camera except when naked and under close scrutiny.

Development should be carried out under test conditions at the nearest chemist's dark room.

There is no known spiritual law which should lead us to think that a psychograph or spirit photograph is a possibility, and until the matter has been tested by a properly qualified body of men all such photographs are open to the gravest suspicion.

Money-making is not the only motive for fraud, and many of the fakers are often more anxious to build up a bogus reputation for "mystery working" than to make a direct profit on the transaction.

The avenues of fraud are so numerous that it is only possible to indicate a few of the methods adopted to deceive the credulous.

The spirit photograph is deemed to be genuine if it is taken under conditions which an average expert photographer holds to be fraud-proof. The weakness of the whole case lies in the fact that they cannot be obtained under

genuine scientific, as opposed to amateur, test conditions.

In a word, the spirit image is imprinted on the negative under conditions not normally suspected by the photographers.

There are several methods of attaining the result, even when the photographer brings his own plates and dark slides and his own camera.

First is the background trick. An acid solution of sulphate of quinine is invisible to the eye, but shows in the photograph. "Phenomena" painted on the wall or near by the objects appear in the photograph though invisible to the eye.

Second is the contact process by which a small negative of the "spirit" face is mounted on a background of card prepared with radioactive salt solution. Many of these salts are rich in infra-red rays which will project an image through a metal dark slide. The "medium" has only to handle the dark slide during the sitting or the plate in the dark room previous to development, in order to make a contact image.

A cruder variation of this, the electric pencil flashlight with a rubber cup over the end containing the "spirit face" negative contact with the exposed plate, is achieved in the dark room. The instrument lies hidden in the medium's sleeves.

The third method is that most commonly used. The "spirit image" is projected through a minute lens in a hole in the wall of the studio. The beam of light is sometimes passed through a prism series in order to allow a room parallel to the studio to be used for the purpose of projecting, and it is possible for the apparatus to be arranged inside a piece of furniture in the studio.

The sitter usually has his back to the source of the projection and the "medium" takes the photograph and makes the exposure, so the fraud is childishly easy.

Even expert photographers are fooled by this trick, as they are satisfied that if plates, slide, and camera are not tampered with, fraud is impossible.

When stereoscopic cameras with twin lenses are used the fraud is manifest. Sometimes the

fakers try hard to get an image into each half of the plate, but never are the "spirit images" in the same relative position or plane.

If the sitters are well known it is not difficult for photographs of deceased relatives to be obtained and the spirit negative made from the photograph. In many cases reproduction of newspaper halftone blocks have been found on so-called spirit pictures. These show the diamond patterns of the screen and are obvious fakes, but are accepted by many uncritical believers.

In the case of an unknown sitter, strange blurred faces or perfect strangers are thrown on to the plate and excused as "guardian angels."

When the medium's own apparatus or dark room is used there are endless ways of faking, but it is these methods of faking an image without raising the ordinary photographer's suspicions that are interesting.

The whole business is a cruel and heartless fraud, but the dupes are not really deserving of pity. If there was a word of truth in the

claim of "spirit photographers" the testimony of an official test by a reputable committee of the Royal Photographic Society would settle the question once and for all.

Myths and legend have grown up round spirit photographs till Spiritualists have at last come to believe in their genuineness. Yet the whole of their belief rests on nothing stronger than the "miraculousness" of a conjuring trick. A good sleight-of-hand expert can accomplish card or other tricks which seem perfectly inexplicable to the layman, but we do not acclaim them as evidences of spirit power because we are deceived by them.

The spirit photographers deplore and avoid investigation by really efficient scientific men. They welcome the amateur with half-knowledge, as his very cocksureness renders him an easier dupe. He concentrates on the obvious roads to fraud, ignoring those which lie without the slender realm of his knowledge.

The phenomena of what may be called lightless photography were long ago described by Dr. Gustave le Bon,* who describes instan-

* *The Evolution of Forces.* Gustave le Bon.

taneous photography by "Black-light." Incidentally a common incandescent gas mantle possesses quite enough radioactive properties for ordinary experiments.

It is only by the destruction of fraudulent phenomena that the phenomena will be rightly understood and generally accepted. The Spiritualist who accepts and bolsters up dubious phenomena does far more harm to his own cause than the most pronounced sceptic.

The main point about spurious spirit photography is this. It claims that mechanical chemical relations are produced by spirit agency—yet though this chemical reaction is said to be produced with ease by certain individuals and circles, it flinches from facing a simple test which would, if proved to be true, convert the bulk of the sceptical world to an acceptance of the truth of spirit photography.

I have met many credulous folk who cherish blurred plates, obvious double exposures, "accidents," such as imperfectly cleaned plates and even the most blatant swindles. Nothing can shake their convictions—but credulity does nothing to *prove* fact.

Mr. Gambier Bolton has experimented for years with spirit photography, but has so far obtained nothing except plates bearing indications of a radiant energy similar to the N-rays of Becquerel. Many expert photographers interested in psychic matters agree that the true spirit photography does not exist and a canvass of both press and studio photographers who are experts in their profession reveals the same unhesitating expression of opinion. The same opinion is held not only by the professional and technical lay element, but by occultists and students of research whose standard of psychic knowledge is infinitely higher than that of the Spiritualists.

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The aura which surrounds the human form is visible to certain people, but the faculty for seeing the aura does not necessarily involve the possession of any psychic gifts at all and is often an indication of a slight degree of colour-blindness.

The ordinary photographic plate represents colours differently to their relative values as seen by the human eye, and in order to get the

true effect certain dyes are mixed with the emulsion of the plates, or dyed screens which eliminate certain rays are interposed between the lens and the object.

The normal individual cannot see the aura, but a simple chemical device will put him on a par with the best natural aura discerner.

If a narrow glass trough or an oblong clear crystal glass bottle is filled with a dilute solution of the dye di-cyanin * which dissolves readily in absolute alcohol; that is all the apparatus necessary.

The subject whose aura is to be inspected should be placed against a black or neutral background opposite a source of illumination, preferably a north-facing window.

The observer then takes the bottle of blue solution and gazes through it at the clear sky for a period of some minutes. This serves to eliminate the retinal impression of certain of the normal light rays and renders the observer's eyes sensitive to vibrations or rays not

* Used in colour screen making for photography, and poisonous. Some glasses used in bottle making are not suitable, but a trial of one or two suitably shaped ones will always reveal one that works all right.

normally perceptible and stimulates an abnormal acuteness of vision.

The room should now be entirely darkened, and as soon as the eyes have recovered their "owl sight" the body of the subject will be seen to be surrounded by an envelope of vibratory exhalations whose colour varies with different individuals and changes under stress of emotion.

Suggestion or hypnosis exercises very peculiar effects on this aura, which would seem to be, if not an ectoplasm a psychoplasm in itself, yet the invisible vehicle which is capable of being separated from the material body and forming the astral body.

The aura vibration and the Becquerel or N-rays are closely connected, and the scientific hypothesis suggests that these rays are in the scale just above the infra-violet.

The simple instrument indicated above has certain therapeutic values in the diagnosis of illness, but is also invaluable for the psychic analysis of hauntings, cases of unconscious mediumship, and other matters.

CHAPTER XI

ORIENTAL OCCULTISM

The Orient hides many secrets of occultism, and it is almost a platitude that the few secrets that the West has painfully deciphered have been known for all time to the East—and are nothing remarkable.

This is one of those large gestures of speech that contain a half-truth and pass for a whole truth. It is on a par with the statement that all Chinese business men are honest—which they are not. Oriental occultism is far too vast a subject to be accepted or dismissed as summarily as this, but one thing is certain, and that is that Oriental occult systems are not suitable to the Western man.

There are one or two cardinal points that may be grasped at once. Firstly, the exiled native in a Western country who claims occult powers and the gift of being able to teach and transmit them is always and invariably a fakir of the

lowest kind. He is usually a low-caste and disreputable native or half-breed, and it may be accounted to his credit that after all he is not expected to know any better. His dupes, on the other hand, the white men and women that listen to his balderdash and sit at his séances, are even guiltier parties than he is. They at least ought to know better than to listen to the first black-and-tan "Swami" or "Guru" that establishes a bogus tabernacle in the backwaters of Balham or Bayswater.

The second point is that the true Eastern occultist, whatever his grade of adeptship in his mysteries, never practises any of his arts or knowledge for money or equivalent reward. This is a lesson which might well be learned by the fraternity of mediums and so-called occultists that infest London and other great cities at home and abroad.

A medium in receipt of fees for séances or lectures will never and can never develop his or her powers beyond the stage at which they have arrived when it becomes possible to use them as a direct or indirect means of making money.

In the East this is realized, and the vow of

poverty is more than a metaphor, but they claim that it is a poverty of the body fully repaid by riches of the soul.

Practically the whole of Hindu occultism is best described as peculiar methods of self-hypnosis with the object of provoking states of bliss and ecstasy. It is upon the basis of the induction of these peculiar phenomena that ninety per cent. of the Brahmin religious cults are established. By one path or another the various beliefs attain earnest of fulfilment, but the primary causes of these psychical phenomena are physiological in origin.

This material path to spiritual success is admitted and glossed over as being but part of the mystery. None the less, there is little to show that anything beyond these self-produced states of hypnotism or suggested phenomena are ever attained by even the greatest of the adepts, and there is no justification of their dogmatic religious teachings even in the results attained.

The Oriental mind is more easily freed from the shackles of the body than is the Western organism. Just as the hold of the average native upon life is inferior to a European's, so

is the native's mastery of conscious will far less. The faculties of clairvoyance can be created by almost every dominant European in any young native, and they are both physically and psychically an inferior race.

It is because of their greater racial familiarity and acquaintance with the occult that the myth of their spiritual supremacy has been born. The unheeding deem every Easterner a potential mage, unknowing that he only develops his psychic gifts, which are in point of fact mental weaknesses, when in contact with a far more powerfully organized Western will.

The organized powers of occult India have loathed and hated British rule since pre-Mutiny days. In a very few rare cases, black magic—often allied with native poisons—has killed a white man, but on the whole the result has been a pitiful demonstration compared to what these magi should have been capable of.

Occultism in India is built to serve but one end, the domination of lesser castes by those who master its secrets and have aptitude to impose their powers on others. In the past it stood for an amazing tyranny, and for this

reason—its lost criminal powers—it is opposed to British rule.

It is noteworthy that the English Society of Theosophists, whose jig-saw religion is largely compounded of Oriental elements, is now prominently identified with schemes for the political emancipation of India, which will reinforce the tyrannous power of the Brahmin.

The whole scheme of Oriental occultism is quite incomprehensible without a sound basic knowledge of the religious systems of which it is part and parcel. These enjoy a difficult and complex nomenclature, and their words have been borrowed indiscriminately without due respect to their precise meaning.

Yoga conveys a certain popular meaning, but it must be remembered that there are numberless Yogas, subdivided again into endless subvariants.

The initiate undergoes a prolonged course of mental and physical training designed to stimulate concentration of the will and subdue the body.

Little by little the faculties of surrender to ecstatic forms of self-hypnosis are induced,

Ananda or "bliss," either material or spiritual ecstasy, according to the Yoga practised, being the end of the process.

The full development of the powers of a Yogi is beset with all kinds of dangers and difficulties. The physical strain is a severe one and the psychic dangers encountered considerable. The evil spirits of the West find their Oriental counterparts in Pisachas, Shahinis, Bhirtas, Pretas, and Rakshashas, all malignant and terrible manifestations of the demon world.

In the end, certain types of Yogi appear to develop the full talents of a materializing medium and are capable of producing the phenomena that we associate with a medium of the power of Eusapia Palladino. But—and it is a very important "but"—these phenomena are capable of production in full tropic daylight.

From the days of Jacolliot * to those of recent Theosophical investigations—Oriental magic has never been brought to real test conditions, but in the records gathered by inde-

* *Occult Science in India and among the Ancients.* Louis Jacolliot.

pendent students there is ample ground for stating that the genuine occult phenomena (as distinct from mere fakir's conjuring tricks) occur independently of darkness or special light conditions.

When we consider the fuss made by European mediums over even twilight conditions, it is remarkable that these offer no obstacle to the Oriental "spirits."

These phenomena, too, are not confined to orthodox Hindu, Brahmin, Tantvik, or Guru followers of any particular creed, race, or religion. Certain Indian Moslem sects produce devotees capable of equivalent phenomena, but variants of obscure Tibetan sects, Burmese, Malay, Mohammedans, and followers of both theistic and pantheistic religions have equal powers.

The idolater, the Muslim, and the Christian medium all share the same belief in "spirit" control and in certain states produce the same results. Where we may learn something from the East is not in the line of morals, for their morals are different from ours—and many of their religious customs revoltingly beastly—but

in the way of the physical induction of the psychic state.

The basis of a great many Yogas is the liberation of psychoplasm and ectoplasm by a combination of concentration on certain internal centres and the repetition of spells or sonorous magical evocations.

These affect the breathing so that in effect the body is subjected to a definite rhythmical vibration. It is physical exercise of mind and brain, applying mind-force to the stimulation and excitement of internal nerve centres.

These six centres are visualized mentally as lotuses. They cannot be precisely located in scientific anatomy, but correspond in most cases with central nervous plexuses and they are as well known in Mohammedan and Zoroastrian mystic cults, as they are in the Indian Upanishads and Tantras, and are familiar to the Indians of Yucatan and Guatemala, where ritual, combined with a species of physical massage, is employed to initiate the hierophant into the tribal mysteries.

The school of Western occultists who hold the theory of the all-pervading astral or magic light

or fire, hold that these "centres" open, or act as concentrators of an exterior, all-prevailing force which is thus conducted to the consciousness, enabling the operator to make contact with another plane.

In the Oriental theory this force is deemed to be always latent in the body, and is aroused, evoked, or stimulated in particular ways. The discussion of the relative values of these two main schools of thought—static and dynamic light—or their variants is beyond the scope of these notes.

The lowest of the lotuses or centres is the nerve centre within the body in the region of the prostatic gland, the next is midway between this and the third which is the navel centre or solar plexus. The fourth is nominally the heart, the fifth, that at the base of the throat, the sixth, that between the eyebrows. In visualizing these lotuses with the "mental eye," the depth back in the body of each centre is assumed to be close to the spine.

Mind force is concentrated by the Yogi under the name Vogabala, and in Oriental black magic this is concentrated on the lowest centre, ac-

cording to the ritual of the infamous Prayoga, with the result of inducing sexual hallucinations.

In the so-called white or mediumistic magic, the centre of energy is apparently by the third centre (the navel), for materialization phenomena, and the fifth, or base of the throat centre for clairaudience.

Those who can reach the sixth claim the power of astral voyaging in the spirit world and perception of things on the mortal plane at a distance.

The physiology of the process is not yet understood, but following on the breathing processes or Pranayama, which relax the body and induce certain rhythms, a progressive excitation and rigor of the centres is induced by autohypnosis. The nerve centres control various limbs and functions, and as each is "put to sleep" so the Yogi becomes rigid and cataleptic.

Yogis are able to hold out their arms for hours at a stretch without apparent fatigue—so in the same way can a hypnotized subject be placed in an attitude of rigidity by an operator.

These progressive inhibitions of functions

cannot be achieved by the Western occultist without the most careful study and painstaking preparations. The practices are both mentally and physically dangerous, but when mastered either in part or in whole, they can be evoked by systems entirely at variance with the accepted Indian methods. In fact, certain nonsense rhymes of the same rhythm and breathing values as some of the Tantric spells or mantras are equally efficacious.

There was infinite wisdom in the old law of magic which said "Change not the *barbaric* names of evocation," but if they were changed, provided rhythm and breathing are preserved, the sense does not appear to matter. If one verse of Macaulay's "Horatius" * was a powerful spell—almost any other verse in the same poem would produce the same effect—if delivered in the same way.

This argument is sometimes used by a sceptic, but after all it only proves that the same result can be produced by analogous means. Salt disappears when dissolved in water, but so it does in half a dozen other liquids.

* *Lays of Ancient Rome.* Macaulay.

The tales of life on other planes brought back by native spirits evoked by Oriental magicians in no way tally with Western accounts, but as phallic worship is integral with many Eastern beliefs, it is no matter for wonder that some Eastern spirit evidence concerning the next plane would make the most hardened Western libertine blush. They also affirm with considerable emphasis that on the next plane nationalities and colour lines are unknown, a point which is reinforced by the number of ex-coloured spirits which frequent Western séances.

It is indeed difficult to know what to believe.

The Yogis can produce phenomena of materialization, prolonged trance states, and can sometimes act as powerful hypnotists and seize the Durga, literally citadel, of another's body. On the other hand, the net yield of all purely Indian occultism is very disappointing. This may be due to the selflessness inculcated in their religious teaching, which subdues love and hatred as equal enemies of spiritual progress. If their magic were efficient, much more would be done with it, and the consensus of general

opinion is that despite its extraordinary interest to the mystic and the scholar it has little to offer of interest to the Spiritualist.

Certain of lesser known Yogas which do produce astonishing phenomena belong definitely to the domain of black magic and only parallel certain well-known outbreaks of phallic sorcery that occurred in Europe in the Middle Ages.

The cult of evocation is held by some students to have spread from India to the Arab races, but more recent investigations suggest that the astonishing performances achieved by certain nominally Moslem sects in the fastnesses of Tripoli and Morocco are due to the survivals from the aborigines of those lands rather than to Oriental ideas.

The Berbers are a distinct primitive race akin to the Basques, and probably identical with the ancient Britons who built Stonehenge. Today they are fanatical Moslemin, but the old practices linger as rituals of specific religious cults, such as the Sufi Senoussi and the Aissouri of Morocco. They are racially strange folk and the Moslem veneer is only a lay religion imposed on a mass of pagan folklore closely con-

nected with serpent worship and astronomical observances. Their festivals of the solstices have an outward-seeming Muslim connection, but the inner hidden occult religion is a far older thing.

The Berbers are not of Arab stock; they are Semitic and they are probably pre-Aryan. Some writers * trace their connection to the original Firbolgs of Iceland, and the ethnology of this mysterious race is still a matter of speculation and doubt.

Pre-eminent among their distinctive differences from the ordinary Arab is the esteem in which they hold women. Women are chieftainesses among them, and above all the women are the repositories of the lost lore of magic. It is to them that the tribesmen turn for the carrying out of the mystic harvest ceremonies, the charming of unfruitful fields, and the lighting of the magic Beltane fires.

Fire plays no inconsiderable part in their rituals, and is only called by its Arabic name el-aafeats (the comforter) when used for domestic purposes. The sacrificial and cere-

* See *The Arabs of Tripoli.* Alan Ostler.

monial fires are always spoken of either in the Shil-luh or Schluch tongue—the true Berber language or referred to as B'lnisac, a term whose philology is unknown, but which apparently contains the age-old Bel or Baal motive.

This fire cult, coupled with a still more mystical inner creed symbolized by serpent worship, may be noted by the student explorer among the Berber folk. Riffis, Mashed Hojja Tuareks of the Sahara, certain Kabyles of Tripoli, and other tribes all belong to the same strange race, and there are reasons for believing that the Berbers are identical with the mystical Fairies —the Good People—so called from a propitiatory irony because they were so amazingly bad.

Berbers alone of savage folk raid and kill at night. They are essentially a people of the dark, and he who sifts the mass of terrible folklore about the earliest fairies in Britain will find a parallel between these terrible unholy barbarians given to sorcery, necromancy and unholy rites, the stealing of children for sacrificial purposes, and other glossed horrors attributed to the Good People—and the Berber races of to-day.

The practices continue.

In 1909 I was travelling in the Gharb country of Morocco, where there is a large Berber element. The French occupation of the Shawiah and the meteoric rise of Sultan Mulai Hafid had left the country unsettled and dangerous.

Beyond a war correspondent or two and a handful of German engineers—or spies, employed by the firm of Marmesman—there were no Europeans in the country outside of the coast towns. For the capital and Manahesh the big cities of the South were closed, and a Christian's life was nowhere worth a moment's purchase among the fanatics.

I am but an indifferent Arabic scholar, but a certain knowledge of classical Hebrew served one well, for there are many debased Jews in Morocco. For the rest, as the high-class Moors are a fair race and often blue-eyed, travelling in native clothes and well bronzed by the sun I suffered no molestation and could rely on the fidelity of my four body-servants.

Some five days' ride northwest of the argan forests of the coast belt, I was well within Berber territory. This was mostly stony hill

lands, for Morocco is simply rock deserts and hills, interspersed with lightly watered fertile valleys and occasional oases of poplar-sheltered walls.

The holy city of Tarudant lay to the north of me, and I had crossed the Wadi Sifan river and was going south from the Iber Kaken Pass on the caravan route east into the Ait Jellal country.

There, deep in the hills, lies the ruin of a Roman city of which strange tales are told. It is even not certain that it is Roman, for a volume of notes, painstakingly compiled for fifteen years by a resident in a coast town, discloses unmistakable Phœnician characteristics, but I at least cannot tell, for my expedition had to beat a swift retreat a bare two days' march from the nominal valley of the dead city.

It was on the way there that my little troop of horsemen and pack mules halted at the Berber village of M'Aerbil Ida and were received as guests of honour for the night. The village was a curious medley of thorn and cactus fences, cane-thatched huts, and deep caves cut

in the friable freestone rock of the mountain side.

The men wore the close-knitted wool caps of the country and had the curious snake-like head angles and the long, curving sidelock and thin beards of coarse hair that just distinguish these strange, elf-like folk. Something in their broad cheekbones and curious pale eyes suggests the snake.

Mohammed-el-Suissi, my horse boy, told me as he pitched my tent that he did not like the village or the people; "they were," he said, "not good Moslemin." As religious orthodoxy was not one of Mohammed's strong points, I did not worry much, but when Hassan-el-Askri, my soldier muleteer, warned me to keep my arms about me I realized that my Moors considered that not even the law of desert hospitality was held inviolate among these folk.

There is, however, a brotherhood of initiates of which I am a member, whose signs are recognized in many parts of the globe. Gesticulation is a feature of polite Arabic conversation, and I soon secured an answering sign from one of the head-men of the tribe. Within half an

hour nobody in that village would have dared to steal the least of my belongings.

I had considerable difficulty in carrying on my conversation as my Arabic, apart from ordinary needs of travel, was weak and classical rather than popular. The Berbers, too, always spoke of these things in their own tongue, Shilluh, and none of my entourage being initiate I had no interpreter.

My host was Sidi-el-Belarni, an old chieftain who was also a *shereef*—that is, a lineal descendant of the Prophet and a person of sanctity. He soon dropped the mask of orthodoxy and conversed freely on the metaphysical side of his cult. I found it easier to understand than to converse with him, but gained an easier appreciation as I got used to it.

I stayed a second day in the village, as one of our animals was badly lamed and needed rest, and took occasion to ask him concerning the art of reviving the dead to temporary life which the Berbers are commonly held to possess.

He made no objections to my questions, and, to my delight, offered to give me a demonstra-

tion if the ritual of the women who held the secrets would consent to exhibit them. At noon I was taken to a kind of tribal palaver and the matter was put to a species of test or judgment by lot. A young girl was blindfolded and given a basket containing short and long sticks. Certain prayers and incantations were performed and she passed into a semi-trance state.

My permission depended on her selection of a majority of short sticks, but as I could not see the sticks, and she was in a state of light hypnosis, I made occasion to recite one or two resounding Hebrew charms and laid my hands on her head; after that, all was easy. Her will obeyed mine and she selected the sticks as I desired. It was almost an unanimous election.

When dusk fell with all its African suddenness, the rising moon hung like a blazing buckler in the sky. Dogs barked in answer to the distant hill jackals and the acrid smoke of the camel-dung fires hung like a sour fog about the camp.

We left the village and went about a quarter of a mile along the hillside to the local burying-place, following a stony track that was little

more than a dried watercourse. At the head of our little procession were two men with flaming argan wood torches tied to long canes, behind them came four men with long silver-decorated Remington rifles, and then the little group of sorceresses followed by myself and the elders.

The burial ground was a scanty clearing among the scrub and dwarf oaks, and bushes encroached upon the outer graves. Each tomb was marked by a stone monolith or pillar, rough-hewn, with a knob at the top in pursuance of the Muslim custom. The graves radiated in circles from the central stone, whereon fluttered little bundles of rags and similar votive offerings.

We made our way to a recent grave, which was rapidly opened by the men, disclosing, a bare two feet beneath the surface, the bent body of a man buried in sitting posture. It was a ghoul-like business and the whole air of the graveyard carried the tainted scent of the dreadful carrion they were unearthing.

In the meanwhile, the women were busy, and from behind the tombs brought forth skulls which they anointed with some strange grease

and set on sticks in a circle round the central altar.

At last the corpse, in its foul, earth-stained wrappings, was exhumed and carried in a piece of sheeting to the altar. The men who had served as guards and grave diggers then withdrew out of earshot, and the ceremonies began.

Fire was applied to the circle of skulls and they began to burn. I noticed that the eyes and ear sockets were stuffed with old rags which served as wicks for the unclean oil. They flared smokily, sending off a foul-scented sooty smoke.

The women began to chant their monotonous wailing rhymes, and their leader rocked to and fro leading this strange chorus.

Suddenly a power seemed to come upon her and she became frenzied, dancing round the skull circle in time to the refrain, but undulating her body in a strange, snake-like manner. Then she knelt down on the ground, and from somewhere about her person produced something which she rubbed on her hands. At first it resembled phosphorus, a quick, flickering faint blue light, but gradually it grew in strength until streamers of blue flame, some six

inches long, seemed to project from her fingers while her whole person seemed outlined in a faint shape of flame.

From the ground she picked up a short length of cane which in her grasp seemed to project this blue emanation—then with a final chorus of evocation, she leapt upon the altar and knelt astride of the dead man.

With quick passes, she ran her hands the length of his slack limbs and then poised both hands above the navel of the corpse, about a foot higher than the shroud.

The emanation curved down like a blue-green waterfall of flame and seemed to enter the man. Incredible as it may seem, the dead limbs slowly began to stretch out jerkily, uneasily, as if awaking, yet—instinct with a new vitality.

The ghastly, lolling head, stained with corruption and bound with the jaw bandage, began to oscillate on the dreadful neck and the whole corpse began to phosphoresce with a dull green luminosity.

The chorus now ceased chanting and a small fire was lighted on a cairn of stones. From this certain objects were taken and placed in

the dead man's hands. The fingers slowly curled up and grasped them!

The singing began again and the sorceress, still across the body, took the cane she carried and, breaking the bandage that bound the dead man's jaw, inserted the end in his mouth.

Then making certain passes and signs with her hands, she began to exhale deep breaths into the body, seeming to make the mystic passes as if to force the living breath down into the dead man's lungs.

Little by little life seemed to creep back into that unholy shell. The dreadful contours of death sunk back, the form became more human and the motions not the strange jerky rigors of the first part of the ceremony, but the very signs of life.

The eyelids flickered and retracted, the dreadful drawn lips relaxed and in a minute or so the dead man sat up in his cerements—and spoke.

Then followed the dread consultation of the dead. It was evident from the awe and respect with which he was addressed that he was treated not as a reanimated individual, but as an august visitant from another world.

Thin, high and shrill, the usually coarse gutturals of the Shilluh tongue seemed strange from *Its* lips. I suspected ventriloquy for a while, but could see the slow movements of its throat muscles and glottis and the rise and fall of the shroud over the sunken abdomen. Nevertheless it was sheer horror to listen to and dreadful, monstrous to see.

I was only permitted to ask one question, and I asked would my quest be successful. I received an unequivocal answer that it would fail, but not through my fault, but because of the will of the spirits of the departed and the curse of the dead that hung over the city.

Incidentally this discounted the advice given by other spirit communicants before the expedition was undertaken,—but later proved true.

The ritual of re-dissolution was shorter but far more terrible. Again the sorceress made passes. The objects were taken from the hands of the dead and slowly the life left the body, which swelled and twitched as it returned to its original state of terrible decomposition. A thin wailing chant seemed to symbolize the

flight of the spirit back to its own realms.

. . . . . .

I pressed unsuccessful inquiry concerning the details of this astounding piece of necromancy which was neither more nor less than that terrible old mystery, the raising of the dead in the flesh.

I could obtain no details of the objects placed in the man's hands or the material used to produce the astonishing outpouring of blue, luminous matter.

So far as I could ascertain, the life force of the sorceress herself entered the body, but the ceremony of creating it was essential in combination with the charms in the hands before the spirit could return.

Neither could I ascertain that it was the soul of the departed or some other spirit that entered into the reanimated corpse.

Some powerful communities are able, it is said, to despatch these dreadful reanimated dead on missions of evil. But their power only lasts throughout the night and fails at sunrise.

Here there is an undoubted suggestion of the

practical possibility of vampirism, but I could not learn that these folk possess the lost art of imprisoning a human or spirit soul within the body of an animal.*

I am nevertheless convinced that among the Berbers of North Africa will be found the key to many legends that have come down to us from our ancestors in Great Britain, and above all I counsel those good folk who read the pleasant little fake stories of pretty little fairies in some of the magazines of what passes for popular occultism to abandon the delusion.

The term good folk is a paradox. They were the demons or spirits of the unholy aborigines working in contact with the savages themselves, and it is good, exceedingly good, that there are no fairies loose in Britain to-day and that the art of summoning them is well-nigh lost.

. . . . . .

This chapter completes all that I have to say for the time being. There is in this book much food for careful thought. Those who read it carefully will find in it keys to much that has

* This practice is claimed to be possible of achievement by both Finn and certain Red Indian wizards. But no facts susceptible of proof have ever been adduced.

puzzled them, and simple explanations of phenomena which have been greatly debated of late. The general reader will doubtless find the incidents the most interesting part of the book, but to the critical and those seriously interested in psychic matters, I commend a careful and reasonable study of the more scientific sections, for in this matter of things psychic both Spiritualist and Sceptic are upon the same quest. From different angles they are both seeking for the Great Truth.

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